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THE ELIZABETHAN LYRIC

A STUDY

BY

JOHN ERSKINE, PH.D.

SOMETIME PROUDFIT FELLOW IN LETTERS
IN COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



New York

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In Memoriam

THOMAS RANDOLPH PRICE

1839-1903

*Che in la mente m' è fitta, ed or mi accora,
La cara e buona immagine paterna
Di voi, quando nel mondo ad ora ad ora
M' insegnavate come l' uom s' eterna.*

PREFACE

THIS study was submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Columbia University. It was undertaken at the suggestion of the late Professor Thomas R. Price, who called the author's attention to the lack of systematic information concerning the history and the nature of lyric poetry in general, and especially of the Elizabethan lyric. The student must depend for his knowledge of the greatest song-period in English literature upon occasional pamphlets, dealing with only parts of the subject, upon introductions to anthologies, or upon scattered passages in the large histories. It is the aim of this study to supply a chronological survey of the English lyric in Elizabeth's time, and to relate its principal movements and themes to one another.

In dealing with the song-books, the author was struck by the indifference or the ignorance of literary historians in regard to the true nature of madrigal music, and its influence upon the lyric. It would seem that no historian of this period has had the twofold interest in music and in literature which is necessary for a complete understanding of any songs. The author has called the reader's

attention to the points of contact of the two arts throughout the Elizabethan lyric; and in reference to the song-books especially, it is his hope to give a clearer exposition of the relation of the music and the words than, so far as he knows, has been given before.

Since there is no real end to the development of the Elizabethan lyric, it was necessary to limit this study by an arbitrary date, and the death of Shakespeare, in 1616, is taken as a convenient stopping-place. Some familiar lyrists, usually considered as late Elizabethans, are here omitted; in each case their absence seems to the author justified by the limits of the book. Donne, for example, is omitted because the spirit of his verse illustrates the seventeenth century rather than the sixteenth, and any adequate consideration of him would involve a discussion of the "metaphysicians."

In the preparation of this book the author incurred many debts of gratitude, which he is glad to acknowledge. He would thank the officials of the Columbia Library for unusual privileges in the use of books, and for their readiness to aid him in many other thoughtful ways. To Dr. William A. Nitze, of the Romance Department, he is indebted for the use of rare books and for other assistance. He would also thank Professor C. L. Speranza, of the same Department, for books most cheerfully placed at his disposal, and for continued inspiration and help throughout his studies. And he acknowledges with pleasure the courteous information in regard to one phase of the Elizabethan lyric

which he received from Professor J. B. Fletcher of Harvard University.

To the faculty of the English Department at Columbia the author is under heavy obligations. Professor W. P. Trent and Professor Brander Matthews rendered valuable assistance by their corrections and suggestions in the proof-sheets. Professor Trent, who directed the preparation of this book, put his time and his scholarship at the author's disposal with a generosity that only the author is in position to appreciate.

When this preface was first written, the author here added a last word of gratitude and love for Professor Price, his master and friend, who suggested this study and inspired many of its leading ideas. The words of admiration which were natural then, would now sound less fitting; death makes such praise seem idle. But the love and gratitude remain. This book will be read most kindly by those who knew Professor Price; may it represent him not unworthily to others.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY,
June 9, 1903.

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THE ELIZABETHAN LYRIC

THE ELIZABETHAN LYRIC

CHAPTER I

LYRICAL QUALITY AND LYRIC FORM

THE LYRIC

THE word *lyric* is used to define both a literary quality and a poetic form; as when we speak, in the first sense, of a lyric drama, and in the second, of the Elizabethan lyric. In both these uses of the word there is considerable vagueness. When we speak of lyrical quality, the vagueness comes from a shifting point of view in the critical history of the word. The Greeks of Aristotle's time applied to the class of poetry known to us as lyric three distinguishing names: "elegiac," to poems in alternate hexameters and pentameters, "melic" or "lyric," to the poetry sung to the lyre by the single voice, and "choric," to the poetry intended for expression by several voices. Such distinctions — which Aristotle himself found to be inadequate¹ — are obvi-

¹ "Even when a treatise on medicine or natural science is brought out in verse, the name of poet is by custom given to the author; and yet Homer and Empedocles have nothing in common but the meter." Aristotle's *Poetics*, I. 8, translated by S. H. Butcher.

ously based on external differences, not on the subject-matter of the poems. It is not hard to imagine a reason. In an early stage of poetic art, when poetry is sung or recited, the external form and the manner of delivery are easiest caught, and to them the critical attention, leaving the subject-matter but roughly classed, directs itself. At first the critic is justified in this; for if the art become highly developed, as in the Provençal lyric, while still it is confined to oral recitation, the ingenuity of the poet, dependent for subject-matter upon familiar and conventional themes, busies itself with variations of the external form. But when poetry is read on the page, rather than recited, the external form becomes less important, and the critic turns to the subject-matter. So, to illustrate the transition, when the Greeks called poetry lyrical, they had in mind the oral recitation to the accompaniment of the lyre; when the critic of to-day uses the word, he is often describing the subject-matter.

But the old significance is still strong in the word. To most people a lyric means a song—that is, a poem that needs for its complete expression, a musical setting.¹ We also call that poetry lyrical

¹ "Song, in its most general acceptation, is defined to be the expression of a sentiment, sensation or image, the description of an action, or the narration of an event, by words differently measured, and attached to certain sounds, which we call melody or tune." Jos. Ritson, *An Historical Essay on the Origin and Progress of National Song*, prefixed to Ritson's *English Songs*, 1783.

which, while complete in itself, suggests an original accompaniment of music. And with neither of these meanings in our thought, we sometimes call that poetry lyrical which expresses directly the quality of music;¹ which by the sound of the phrase, or by the suggestion of the word, or by the mere connotation of ideas, produces the emotional effect of music. It will be observed that all these shades of meaning are allied with the Greek idea, the traditional association of music with the poem sung by one person. We should also note that they include the choric idea; we now apply the word *lyric*, in our common use, indifferently to the expression of individual or of choric personality.

It is unnecessary to state that the modern lyric, with the exception of the hymn, does not presuppose a musical rendering. Yet as late as Wordsworth the tradition of oral recitation persisted. Speaking of his own poetry he says:² "Some of these pieces are essentially lyrical; and, therefore, cannot have their due force without a supposed musical accompaniment; but, in much the greatest part, as a substitute for the classic lyre or romantic harp, I require nothing more than an animated or impassioned recitation, adapted to the subject." The average critical idea of to-day, however, is

¹ Brunetière, essay on Victor Hugo, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, April 15, 1902.

² Preface, 1815-1845. *Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, W. Knight, 1896, ii. p. 207.

expressed by M. Brunetière, in his theory of the "inward song," *chant intérieur*¹; our lyrics, he says, sing themselves in the heart, not on the tongue; the imagination supplies the physical effect, just as it does when we read a drama. Yet even if oral recitation of the lyric be largely a thing of the past, for most people the lyric is still tested by the ear rather than by the eye. Intricate structure can indeed best be seen on the page, but even there only a trained eye can see it. To the general reader Tennyson's idyl in the *Princess* is charming by virtue of its "moan of doves in immemorial elms," not on account of its remarkable structure.²

Since the arts of music and poetry start together and complement each other in the early lyric, we are led to consider where and why they separated. In the first place, it is remarkable that where we have remains of an early song literature, as in Greece, Provence, or Germany, it is not the music that has come down to us, but the words. It is not a sufficient explanation to say that music, being dependent for its growth largely upon mechanical inventions, has developed as an art much more slowly than poetry, and is not so easily preserved. As we have noticed, in an oral song-literature, the themes treated are largely conventional, and in the process of trans-

¹ Essay on Victor Hugo, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, April 15, 1902.

² Cf. Professor Brander Matthews, *An Inquiry as to Rime*, in *Parts of Speech*, 1901, p. 245.

mission from one generation of poets to another, have every chance of preservation. But in order to suit the constant resetting of stanza-forms, as each poet treats in his own way the familiar themes, the music must continually vary, and so can hardly become as conventional as the words. It can identify itself with each lyric idea only by reserving for that idea some particular rhythm; or at the most, by the use of different modes, as in the Greek, it can lend the theme a characteristic emotional color. But words also are capable of producing these effects of rhythm and tonality, and as the traditional themes went through the process of transmission and reworking, gradually arriving at a complete art-form, they caught more and more of the quality of their musical accompaniment. Here the final separation begins. Words and music remain on good terms only so long as each does not invade the special art of the other. When the words supply the idea, and the music furnishes the emotion, and both compromise on a common theme, as in all hymns, we have the practical song-lyric. But when the music attempts to express both emotion and idea, as in the symphonic poem, or when words take on the cadence of music, as they often do, then each art, to be enjoyed in its specialty, must be heard alone.¹ It is a familiar phenomenon, that when

¹ "I once asked an eminent musician, the late Madame Goldschmidt, why Shelley's lyrics were ill-adapted to music. She made me read aloud to her the *Song of Pan* and those

words are joined to music, the verbal melody is lost in the notes; and in the same way, though it does not concern us here, music loses any particular intellectual message it may have, when joined with words. So when the poets of an early literature, handing down their lyric themes, begin to add musical quality to the bare words, they are beginning an art which they can appreciate without the aid of music; and from that moment the words are likely to be heard alone. Ignorance of this principle has caused many a failure when great poets have written words for music. A good example is Tennyson's "Far—far—away," a song that is almost impossible for musical setting, because it is already so musical. The Elizabethan song-writers, understanding the principle, were content, at least in the earlier period, to leave the emotional expression to the music. When Campion wrote at a later time, the appreciation of song-words for their own sake was matured, and his songs have high musical quality; it is not surprising that they were frequently reprinted without the music. How rough some of the famous Elizabethan songs were, in cases where the functions of words and music were

lovely lines *To the Night*, 'Swiftly walk over the western wave, Spirit of Night!' Then she pointed out how the verbal melody was intended to be self-sufficing in these lyrics, how full of complicated thoughts and changeful images the verse is, how packed with consonants the words are, how the tone of the emotion alters, and how no one melodic phrase could be found to fit the dædal woof of the poetic emotion." *Essays Speculative and Suggestive*, J. A. Symonds, ii. pp. 251-252.

distinguished, is seen in the song of Thomas Weelkes, one of the greatest madrigal writers:—

“Thule, the period of cosmographie,
Doth vaunt of Hecla, whose sulphurous fire
Doth melt the frozen clime and thaw the skie,
Trinacrian Ætna's flames ascend not higher,” etc.

The best modern example of the practical relation of words and music is the hymn. The hymns that survive in use are invariably simple, bare ideas set to easy music. When the words happen to come from a great poet, and take on complicated stanza-form or variable rhythm, they are in the main relegated to collections of poems, and left unsung.

As was said before, the Greeks had several terms for the general class of poetry we call lyric, their use of that particular word being confined to songs for one voice, accompanied by the lyre. Judging even by that external mark, we can see that the songs of one voice were likely to be more individual, more personal, than those voiced by a multitude, as in choric poetry. The direct, personal expression, then, is latent in all lyric poetry, even in the Greek sense of the word; in some kinds of poetry it would seem to have been always a convention, as in religious addresses to a divinity, or lovers' songs to their mistresses. As the personal note grows stronger, the choral or communal quality tends to disappear. This evolution, as has been shown before,¹ is due

¹ Gummere, *Beginnings of Poetry*, p. 147.

to social developments and changes in civilization, which help the poet to depend less upon the community for ideas and opportunities to express them, and more upon himself. The invention of printing,¹ to name no other example, gave poets a certain boldness necessary to subjective expression, hardly to be expected in an oral revelation of themselves. The Renaissance, with all its impulses to personal, subjective expression, developed the possibilities of the lyric; and the critic of to-day, forced to look for the distinguishing trait of poetry, not in external differences but in the subjective matter, finds the mark of lyric poetry in this quality of direct, personal utterance.² The musical connotations of the term have a very subordinate position, and often are not felt at all.

Though the poet's personality, directly expressed, is the mark of the modern subjective lyric, the poet's presence in the poem is not always equally felt. The subjective note may take a more or less dramatic form. The simplest and most direct expression may be seen in what has been called the first English lyric, "Sumer is icumen in,"³ where the poet, uttering his joy spontaneously, seems unconscious

¹ Gummere, *Old English Ballads*, p. xi.

² "Wir bezeichnen die lyrische Poesie als die subjective; subjectiv aber nennen wir einmal das persönliche Seelenleben im Unterschied der Aussenwelt und den Dingen." *Die Poesie*, Moriz Carriere, 1884, p. 367. "Unser Sprachgebrauch ist . . . wenn der Dichter von sich redet, es ein Lied zu nennen, wenn er von Andern redet, eine Ballade." Sherer, *Poetik*, p. 249.

³ Ritson, *Ancient Songs and Ballads*, i. p. 10.

of any audience. A more complicated form is Lovelace's "Tell me not, Sweet, I am unkind,"¹ in which, though the poet speaks directly, a situation is indicated that involves another character besides his own. The most dramatic form of lyric, in which the poet makes use of other characters to express his emotions, is well shown in Scott's song, "Proud Maisie is in the Wood."²

These, then, are the different meanings critics have attached to lyrical quality. The earliest use had in mind the musical accompaniment that the word suggests; the modern habit finds the characteristic note in subjective expression. The change came over English poetry finally at the Renaissance, and is comprehensively illustrated by the lyric literature from Wyatt to Herbert. In English criticism, however, the new point of view was slow to find a reflection; the Elizabethan critics, following the classical tradition, used "lyric" only with the idea of musical quality or accompaniment.³

So much for lyrical quality. Lyric form,⁴ however, is much more difficult to define. The vagueness of the term comes, not as in the case of lyrical quality, from a shifting point of view in criticism,

¹ Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, p. 88.

² *Ibid.*, p. 258.

³ See Puttenham, *Art of English Poesie*, Arber Reprint, p. 40; Sidney, *Apologie for Poetrie*, Arber Reprint, p. 46; Campion, *Art of English Poesie*, Haslewood, 1815, p. 181.

⁴ The term "lyric form" in this study is used to describe not the stanza but the internal structure; much as one might speak of "dramatic form," meaning the motivation and development of the action. Exceptions to this use will be made explicit.

but rather from an almost total neglect on the part of all critics. Aristotle told exactly what the drama is, but said nothing of the lyric. In English literature the only contributions to this subject, small as they are, come from compilers of song-anthologies, who have found themselves at a loss to distinguish between the true lyric and the abundance of poetry that has lyrical quality. Having formulated a working rule of their own, they sometimes give it to their readers, for what it may be worth. Ritson was probably the first song-anthologist to do this, and his chief success was to distinguish between the narrative ballad and the song—a distinction he arrived at by defining the ballad rather than the lyric.¹ An important attempt to define lyric form is Palgrave's, who holds "lyrical" to imply "that each poem shall turn on some single thought, feeling, or situation."² This definition indicates briefly what might be called the "lyric unit." The fundamental trait of the lyric form, as distinguished from narrative, is unity of emotion, corresponding to unity of action in the drama. As in the drama the poet is concerned with the expression of human will, stimulated to action by some situation of love or ambition or jealousy, etc., so in the lyric he

¹ Prefatory essay to *English Songs*, 2d ed., 1813, p. i. note: "With us, songs of sentiment, expression, or even description, are properly termed *songs*, in contradistinction to mere narrative compositions, which we now denominate *ballads*."

² *Golden Treasury*, Preface.

busies himself with the expression of human emotion, having its origin and development in some stimulus of nature, of accident, or of thought. But here the parallel stops. As soon as a drama is put in motion, the stimulus or motive is absorbed into the action; when the first step is taken, it becomes the reason for the second step, and the second step becomes the reason for the third, and so on until the inevitable catastrophe. In the lyric, however, the stimulus remains distinct in the foreground, giving rise to the emotion and controlling its development. Again, in narrative or dramatic forms, some preparation is necessary before the stimulus is introduced that begins the action. The lyric, on the other hand, when properly constructed, begins with the stimulus, and when the resulting emotion subsides, it must end. Examples will be noticed, however, where the song ends *before* the emotion subsides. Where the poet is a master of his art, such an ending is accounted for by the particular effect he is seeking.

The number of ways in which the stimulus may be presented is infinite, but the necessity is always the same—to get before the hearer the cause of the poet's emotion. This is accomplished often by a description or an invocation, as:—

“Thou still unravished bride of quietness.”

or:—

“O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being!”

Sometimes the poet merely suggests the situation in which his emotion found its stimulus, as : —

“Tell me not, Sweet, I am unkind,”

or : —

“Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more.”

Or in still another way, the poet may simply state the idea that has stirred him to song, as : —

“Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments.”

or, again : —

“Who will believe my verse in time to come,
If it were filled with your most high deserts ?”

An examination of these examples will show the rather obvious fact that the stimulus to lyrical emotion may be found in almost any part of human experience; these particular illustrations being taken from the realm of nature and art — the observed world, from the realm of human incident, and from the realm of thought. In all of them a constant law seems to be in evidence, that lyric emotion, in order to express itself intelligibly, must first reproduce the cause of its existence. If the poet will go into ecstasies over a Grecian urn, to justify himself he must first show us the urn. In this point poetry differs widely from music, which, free from the intellectual intention implied in any use of words, appeals directly to the senses, and is its own emotional stimulus. A musician may be profoundly stirred by the

sight of a Grecian urn; if so, his art is adequate to express his emotions, though he is unable to suggest the appearance of the urn that inspired him. But Keats, moved by the same subject, must first picture to us the stimulus, and then we understand his emotion. This distinction between the laws of lyric poetry and of music is important, because it explains the success of many songs that, until they are sung, are intellectually and emotionally ineffective. Read as poetry, they fail to offer us any stimulus; when set to music, — an art that supplies its own sensuous excitement, — they find a proper use as mere syllables, making possible a variety in the singer's intonation.

A distinction should be made between the emotional stimulus of a lyric and its subject. The emotional stimulus refers always to the non-intellectual part of the poem, though the intellectual element results from it. Excellent illustrations are two lyrics of Sir Philip Sidney, the sonnet beginning: —

“High-way, since you my chief Parnassus be,”

and the song: —

“The nightingale, as soon as April bringeth.”

In each case the emotional stimulus and the subject are quite distinct. The stimulus in the first example is the roadway along which the poet rides; in the second case it is the nightingale.


But the subject—the intellectual message—of both poems, is the poet's love.

The law of unity is as natural and inexorable in lyric emotion as it is in dramatic action. The lyric stimulus sets the tone or quality of the emotion, and controls it till the end. For example, to refer again to Keats, the *Ode on the Grecian Urn* takes its classic reserve, its plastic quality, from the stimulus it so continually contemplates; or, to state it differently, by keeping the reader's eye fixed upon the urn, the poet makes him feel the emotional value of the poem in terms of plastic quality. On the same principle, though with a different manner, Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* reproduces the emotional effect of the wind, which it keeps present before our thought. If the original stimulus does not so control and sustain the emotion, the lyric either breaks down entirely, or else separates into fragments, each a complete lyric unit in itself. This last condition is well seen in Jonson's lines to Celia:—

“Drink to me only with thine eyes.”

The two stanzas have the same subject,—a courtly profession of love,—but each has its own emotional stimulus, and is a song by itself. The poet's message would be rendered by either stanza alone, or with their order reversed.

The obvious inference from this law of emotional continuity is that, where the lyric stimulus



is an idea, or an intellectual proposition, the lyric is likely to take on a strongly meditative or philosophical character. With a large intellectual element in such poems, it is not surprising that though they often have verbal sweetness, they rarely show spontaneous song-quality. They are classed as lyrics, not in the musical sense of the Greeks, but on account of their direct expression, the "subjectivity" taken as a standard by modern critics. Some of Shakspeare's sonnets, and many songs written in England under Petrarchan influence, illustrate this tendency of the intellect to lower the temperature of the lyrical emotion.

The test, then, of lyrical *quality* is the twofold historic standard of musical origin and of direct subjective expression. The test of lyric *form* is first, the unity of the emotion resulting from the lyric stimulus, and secondly, the formative effect of the stimulus upon the development of the emotion.

Judged by such standards, many long poems, which in quality are undoubtedly lyrical, in form should be considered a series of lyric units rather than one song. This is true of all poems built up, in the idyllic manner, by a series of pictures. Where a poem deals with but one picture, however highly wrought, of course all the requirements of the single lyric may be fulfilled. But in the longer idyls, whenever the poet directs the reader's attention to a new picture, he introduces a new lyric

stimulus and begins what we may for critical purposes regard as a new song. A good example is the *Epithalamium* of Spenser, a poem as lyrical, so far as quality goes, as any in our literature. But in form it is an idyl. All the incidents and phases of the poet's wedding-day are treated, picture by picture, each in a separate stanza, and many different motives of love poetry are introduced. The poet describes the dawn, with a prayer to his mistress to awake (the ancient *chanson d'aubade*); he describes the singing of the birds that greet her when she rises; the minstrels and bridal choir that escort her when she comes forth; her personal appearance; the church as she enters; the scene at the altar, etc. Even within the single picture, the lyric mood is sometimes interrupted, as in the eleventh stanza, where the poet turns aside to preach decorum:—

“ With trembling steps, and humble reverence,
She commeth in, before th' Almightyes view;
Of her ye virgins learne obedience,
When so ye come into those holy places,
To humble your proud faces:
Bring her up to th' high altar,” etc.

The poet has preserved a certain feeling of unity by the natural order of his scenes, reproducing the marriage day in sequence, from dawn to midnight. There is also a unity of mood throughout, derived from the poet's constant ecstasy of love and joy. But on the formal side, the poem is a series of

lyric units, not one song. However lyrical in quality such poems may be, the typical song is short.

Almost more important, however, than the unity of lyrical emotion, is the proper development of it. A lyric is too short or too long, according as the emotion is thwarted in its development, or fails to sustain the thought. The test of a lyricist's art is the judgment with which he proportions the length to the force of the emotion.¹

Speaking broadly, all successful lyrics have three parts. In the first the emotional stimulus is given — the object, the situation, or the thought from which the song arises. In the second part the emotion is developed to its utmost capacity, until as it begins to flag the intellectual element reasserts itself. In the third part, the emotion is finally resolved into a thought, a mental resolution, or an attitude. The process of such a lyric illustrates the natural transition from a stimulated emotional state to a restoration of the normal condition of mind. This law of lyric expression is most often violated, among skilful writers, in the case of idyllic songs, like Tennyson's "Tears, idle tears," in which the interest is in the little pictures. Here the emotion is but gently stimulated, and not developed at all. Such lyrics have little or no

¹ Cf. Poe's theory, in the essay on the *Poetic Principle*, that any poem to have unity must end with the subsidence of the reader's attention. *Works*, Stedman and Woodberry, vi. p. 3 sq.

structural organism, as may be seen by transposing or omitting several of the stanzas.

A good illustration of the properly constructed lyric is Matthew Arnold's fifth poem to Marguerite, in the Switzerland series. The first stanza gives the lyric stimulus in the conception of human life as an individual separation:—

“Yes! in the sea of life enisled,
With echoing straits between us thrown,
Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
We mortal millions live *alone*.
The islands feel the enclasping flow,
And then their endless bounds they know.”

In the second and third stanzas the emotion is developed by a study of “enisled” souls under different conditions. The contrast in the second stanza is sufficient to arouse intellectual speculation, which finds expression in the third stanza:—

“But when the moon their hollows lights,
And they are swept by balms of spring,
And in their glens on starry nights,
The nightingales divinely sing;
And lovely notes, from shore to shore,
Across the sounds and channels pour—

“Oh! then a longing like despair
Is to their farthest caverns sent;
For surely once, they feel, we were
Parts of a single continent!
Now round us spreads the watery plain—
Oh might our margins meet again!”

In the last stanza this emotional conflict is resolved into an attitude of awe toward a superior and controlling order — an attitude that is intellectual rather than emotional:—

“ Who ordered that their longing’s fire
Should be as soon as kindled, cooled ?
Who renders vain their deep desire ? —
A God, a God their severance ruled !
And bade betwixt their shores to be
The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea.”

CHAPTER II

THE LYRIC IN ENGLAND BEFORE THE MISCELLANIES

I

THE prevailing mood of Anglo-Saxon poetry is elegiac—that is, it is much given to complaint, or at least contemplation, of human unhappiness. This mood, however, is racial rather than individual; it gives tone to the whole literature, but is rarely concentrated in a personal note. As a result, this period yields few examples of the true elegy,—the funeral song,—although from the social position of the *scôp*, the mourning theme would seem especially natural. Wherever in society the bard is dependent, as in Provence or Old England, he is likely to feel keenly the death of his patron; the loss is practical enough to occasion real human misery. In Provençal literature this situation gives rise to the conventional funeral-song, the *planh*, expressing direct personal grief. In Anglo-Saxon, however, the grief is absorbed into the national mood, and intensifies it; the poet takes a slightly darker, but not more individual, view of life.

A familiar example in point is the *Wanderer*, a lyric of subjective expression, rather than of song-quality. The singer has become an outcast through the death of his patron. A Romance poet would have traced his misfortune to that event, but the Anglo-Saxon temperament generalizes the subject into a complaint against the cruelty of fate, of which the patron's death is only one incident. The attention is fixed not on the event, but on the principles it illustrates — the frailty of happiness, and the poignancy of its memory.

This generalization of what would seem to be a very personal grief, suggests that the character of the *Wanderer*, as probably that of the *Seafarer*¹ also, is not a direct revelation, but, like the subjects of the Elizabethan sonnet-series, is a dramatic conception. Both lyrics are built upon situations and enlightened by images that must have been associated with typical modes of life. The latter poem in particular is strongly dramatic, yet is a good example of lyric form. It is mentioned here, although only partly elegiac, because of its usual association with the *Wanderer*. If we follow those critics who regard only the first sixty-six lines as properly belonging to the poem, we find the verses divided almost equally into two perfect lyric units, each with its own stimulus and emotional development. In the first the *Seafarer* sings of his long hardships at sea: —

¹ Grein-Wülker, *Bibliothek der angelsäch. Poesie*, i. p. 245.

"I can sing of myself a true song, of my voyages telling,
How oft through laborous days, through the wearisome
hours,
I have suffered." ¹

The description of privation and monotony on the ship is realistic, with the characteristic point of view of the sailor, that nothing so hard befalls the landsman. Then the poet turns to the second phase of his song: though the life be hard, the inborn spirit of adventure ever drives him back to the waves:—

"Yet the thoughts of my heart now are throbbing
To test the high streams, the salt waves in tumultuous
play." ²

One exception to the general Anglo-Saxon elegy is the poem in the *Chronicle* on the death of Eadward, murdered in 979.³ The date is so late that the verses can hardly affect an opinion of the Old English elegy as a whole. Their interest is that they seem to express personal grief and indignation, and are applicable only to the one situation. In the other opportunities for elegiac expression afforded by the *Chronicle*,⁴ the writer has contented himself with a respectful enumeration of the virtues of the departed, without sufficient enthusiasm to raise the verses to the emotional level of poetry.

The dramatic tone of the Anglo-Saxon lyric,

¹ *Translations from O.E. Poetry*, Cook and Tinker, p. 44.

² *Ibid.*, p. 46.

³ *The Chronicle*, Earl and Plummer; 979, Laud Ms.

⁴ Cf. *The Chronicle*, Earl and Plummer; 959, Laud Ms.

noticed in the *Wanderer* and the *Seafarer*, and seen also in the *Wife's Complaint*,¹ finds unique expression in the riddles. In these the poet never speaks directly, but uses the subject of the riddle as a mouthpiece, trying to give the subject's point of view. All riddles, from the nature of their use, must be largely descriptive, and would seem to imply an artificial, unemotional structure. The Anglo-Saxon bard, however, in striving for imaginative description from the inside—subjective description—tends toward a lyric mood. With a few exceptions, as in the *Swan*,² he fails of lyric form; the riddle usually contains such a number of incongruous details—the *Horn*, for example—as to forbid any lyric unity or development. The *Swan*, however, with its single motive of the noise of its wings, is a perfect unit, and has, besides, the emotional lift of lyric poetry. The poem called the *Love-Letter* or the *Husband's Message*,³ probably belongs also in this class, though the lyrical element is stronger and the dramatic turn is less. The message is introduced practically by a riddle, the lover speaking in the character of the wood on which the letters are cut.

Another kind of Anglo-Saxon lyric, as deeply rooted in the past as the riddles themselves, is found in the charm-songs. These incantations are remarkable not only for their evident antiquity, but also because they reappear, modified by lit-

¹ Cook and Tinker, p. 64. ² *Ibid.*, p. 72. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 61.


erary genius, in Chaucer and Shakspeare. At the same time they persisted untouched in those levels of social intelligence in which they had their origin. Some of the charms preserved to us seem to have been old when Christianity reached England, if we may consider as evidences of age their pagan spirit and their apparent subjection to long-continued garbling.¹ Others seem to have compromised with the new ideas, and appeal alike to pagan and Christian deities.² A few examples are thoroughly Christian, and are little more than prayers.³ This species of literature, always of a popular origin, keeps its simplicity by the condition of its popular use. It is lyrical in the Greek sense of oral delivery, since it must be sung or chanted to be used at all. The use to which it is put implies an original subjective sincerity on the part of the user, else it would not be a true incantation. It usually has lyric unity of form, perhaps because the user has his mind intent on the purpose of the charm. Some of the examples show a tendency toward repetition, recurring to one phrase; when the lyrics are of any length, this recurrence is recognizable as a refrain; as in the charm for a stitch in the neck: —

“Loud were they, lo loud, when over the hill they rode,
Resolute were they when over the hill they rode;

¹ Cf. Nine herbs charm, *ibid.*, p. 169.

² Cf. Charm for bewitched land, *ibid.*, p. 164.

³ Cf. Charm for lost cattle, *ibid.*, p. 171.



Now shield thyself, that thou mayest survive this
malice !

Out, little spear, if herein it be !

I stood under linden, under the light shield,

Where the mighty women mustered their force,

And whizzing spears they sent ;

I will send them back another,

A flying dart directly against them.

Out, little spear, if herein it be !” etc.

The charm-songs have their source in the remotest times. They grow out of the primitive belief in a power residing in spoken or chanted words to bless or destroy. The story of Orpheus and many Germanic tales illustrate this belief.¹ The charms, to be effective, must be carefully chosen as to words, well constructed, rhythmic, with the quality of song.² Their essence is lyrical. At first the power resides in the words themselves ; later, with clearer conception of a deity, it is ascribed to some superior being, and the charm becomes a prayer.³

The religious lyric had but the humblest beginnings in Anglo-Saxon literature. The few surviving examples betray a lack of spontaneity and of song quality. The *Address to Christ*,⁴ and still more, the *Hymn to the Virgin*,⁵ show that the lyric emotion is overlaid by the delight in theological history and doctrine. The *Address to Christ*, however,

¹ Grimm's *Teutonic Mythology*, trans. by J. S. Stallybrass, London, 1883, iii. p. 907.

² *Ibid.*, p. 1223.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 1235.

⁴ Thorpe, *Codex Exoniensis*, p. 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

is remarkable for dwelling not on the death and suffering of the Saviour, as usually in the Middle English lyric, but on the benefits of the Incarnation, the rebuilding of the spiritual life, and the opening of Paradise. In this hymn, as in that to the Virgin, the poet's imagination is struck by the human relation of the Virgin mother to her divine son, — a motive that, receiving fuller development from the more sensitive ideas of chivalry, appears prominently in the Middle English lyric. These hymns are but poor examples of lyrical quality or of lyric form; their interest is that they introduce what prove to be important themes. On the formal side the short hymn of Cædmon¹ is much better, since it expresses a single lyrical emotion, with no non-lyric elements interpolated; but its shortness — only nine lines — and its fragmentary nature, make it unimportant.

The Anglo-Saxon period yields one fine war-song, the forerunner of many a later patriotic ode — the *Battle of Brunanburh*.² This is a true lyric, whose emotional unity has its roots in the national or racial pride, and in the general glory of battle. In spirit it is very near to the choric song, like the odes of Pindar, being the lyrical expression, not of one personality, but of a community. Such lyric expression occurs only when the community is thoroughly united and fired by a universal enthusiasm; few examples are found before Minot, and

¹ Grein-Wülker, ii. p. 316.

² Cook and Tinker, p. 26.

just as few between him and Drayton. In Anglo-Saxon literature there may have been numerous songs of this character. A probable explanation of their disappearance is that, unless used for historical purposes, they would not appeal to the monks, the only scribes, and so would perish with the tradition of oral recitation.¹

The two Anglo-Saxon lyrics that perhaps connect most easily with later song history, are the *Song of Widsith*² and *Deor's Complaint*.³ The *Song of Widsith* is more narrative in quality than lyrical, but it gives a fair picture of the life of the bard, and of the estimation in which his art was held. Wherever a great man was found who knew the power of song and who desired fame, the bard was well entertained, and in return for the hospitality and gifts, he immortalized his host,—"eternized," as the Elizabethans would say. *Deor's Complaint* is, on the formal side, the best lyric expression of the period. It is remarkable for the use of refrain and for what is practically stanza-form. Each stanza treats one distinct phase of the poem, thrown sharply into relief by the refrain. The climax, carefully prepared, is reached in the last stanza by a personal application of this burden. This lyric method, in swiftness, pointedness, and climactic force, suggests strongly the later French ballade.

If we were to look for any quality in the Anglo-

¹ Cf. Stopford Brooke, *Hist. Eng. Lit.*, 1880, p. 16.

² Cook and Tinker, p. 3.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

Saxon lyric that is permanent in English song, we should find it to be the dramatic quality noticed in the *Wanderer* and in the *Seafarer*. The race seems from the first to have the power of expressing its emotion through an imaginative type. On the other hand, it is hard to find any direct personal expression in the poetry of the period. *Deor's Complaint* seems to strike an individual note, but it may be as purely imaginative as Widsith's song probably is; the very name Widsith — "far-traveller" — coincides suspiciously with the contents of the poem; and some scholars — Ten Brink, notably — maintain that different parts of the song were composed at different times.

The charms and the war-song remain constant but infrequent elements in the national lyric; the charms, though preserved in the life of the peasants, seldom get into literature, and the occasions of national unity and success, such as give rise to the true ode of war, occur rarely in any history. The riddles, of course, as an art-form, disappear early; the religious lyric, however, soon becomes important.

II

The first department of song after the Conquest to feel the effect of foreign influences was the religious and moral lyric. At once the Latin and French rhythms seemed to put new vigor into what,

during the Anglo-Saxon period, was at best but an uninspired form. The first important lyric to show the new influence was the *Moral Ode*,¹ written before 1200. It follows the measure of the classical septenarius, which, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries seems to have taken strong hold of English verse.² The subject of the ode is only partly lyrical; it is the statement of a philosophy of life, and echoes the tone of the old gnomic songs. But the curious personality, so sincerely revealed in the poem, entitles it to rank well among the lyrics of subjective expression. In its dark spirit and sententious manner, it shows its nearness to the Anglo-Saxon mood; in verse-form it shows the arrival of the Latin measure and the establishment of rime; these marks of its frontier position in the growth of the Middle English lyric constitute its importance.

The *Moral Ode* is followed — about 1210 — by the *Oreison of Ure Lefdi*,³ supposed to be a translation from the Latin. The extremely exalted lyric mood of this song shows at once a fervor of religious thought and a sincerity of poetic imagery not found in the Anglo-Saxon lyric. In spirit and dignity of inspiration this is the first typical example of the Middle English hymn, though its subject-matter, derived from abroad, has not the dramatic element

¹ Morris, *Old Eng. Hom.*, 2d series, p. 220.

² Cf. Guest, *Eng. Rhythms*, W. W. Skeat, p. 474 sq.

³ *Old Eng. Hom.*, 1st series, p. 191.

that later English poets added. It is a song of pure adoration, full of very sincere reverence and love. As in the *Moral Ode*, the lines are rimed in couplets, but they show remarkable freedom of structure. They consist in turn of septenaries, alexandrines, or native alliterative verses, as the mood of the poet takes him; yet the different schemes are skilfully blended, and the verse flows unbroken.¹

Both Latin and French influences were felt first in the meter and language of the English lyric, but they soon appeared more directly. Certain religious songs were formed on a scheme of alternating English and Latin lines; the Latin lines were usually short phrases of the Roman hymns, and had somewhat the effect of burdens or refrains, yet served an organic purpose in the sentence structure of the stanza.² Between 1244 and 1250 these verses were written:—

¹ A fragment attributed to St. Godric (died 1174) ought to be mentioned for its meter. It is an address to the Virgin (quoted in Guest, p. 442). Its two stanzas each express the same idea. The first is irregular and unmetrical; the second is a tetrapody quatrain, with clear trochaic movement.

² Anglo-Saxon examples of combination with Latin, though not in lyrics, are found in Grein-Wülker, ii. pp. 228, 245, 297, and iii. p. 116, the last eleven lines of the *Phoenix*. This whole phenomenon is similar to the bilingual use of Provençal and Italian, by troubadours who came into Italy in the twelfth century. Cf. Flamini, *Storia della Lett. Ital.*, p. 8. The mixture of other languages with English is familiar in modern poetry; Longfellow, for example, employs the device several times. But of course it is now a literary affectation, rather than a bilingual use.

“Of on that is so fayr and brigȝt,
 velud maris stella,
 Brigter þan the dayis ligȝt,
 parens et puella;
 Ic crie to þe þon se to me,
 Levedi preye þi son for me,
 tam pia,
 þat ic mote come to þe,
 Maria.”¹

The English and the Latin verses, in such compositions, have each their own separate riming system. The same rule is observed where French and English verses are combined, as is seen in the example given by Warton²:—

“Mayden moder milde, oyez cel oreysoun,
 From shome thou me shilde, e de ly mal feloun;
 For love of thine childe, me menez de tresoun,
 Ich wes wod and wilde, or su en prisoun,” etc.

The obvious effect of putting side by side poetic systems so different, would be to level both to a common rhythmic form. By this practice the varied English meters are smoothed down to conform to the more regular foreign models. For a long time, however, the change is apparent only in the writing of the higher classes, as here—probably in the work of a priest—one whose training would make him at home with Latin and French, rather than with Saxon, schemes of versification.

¹ *Old Eng. Mis.*, Rich. Morris. *Early Eng. Text Soc.*, 1872. In other cases the English lines rime directly with the Latin; cf. *Percy Soc.*, xxiii. p. 48.

² *Hist. of Eng. Poetry*, 1824, i. p. 86, Note. Quoted from Mss. Harl. 2253.

The native rhythms keep their vigor in the poetic expression of the lower classes, up to the time of Chaucer, when they are again traceable in that poet of culture.

The direct effect of Latin lyrics is confined largely to influence upon meter and stanza, and is found first in these songs of the church. But at least one very different theme is introduced through the Latin language — the drinking-song. The vigorous lyric ascribed to Walter Map, — *Mihi est propositum in taberna mori*,¹ — brings into England for the first time the spirit of clearly articulated conviviality. Later examples will show, in contrast, that the native drinking-song is forbiddingly realistic in subject and manner.²

The poems written in Norman-French had their influence on the narrative rather than on the lyric part of our literature. One great name remains, however, though its literary influence is practically nothing. Richard the Lion-hearted followed troubadour traditions, patronized famous minstrels, and himself practised the art. While in prison, he is supposed to have written two *sirventes*.³ In one, —

¹ *Percy Soc.*, xxiii. p. 1. *Festive Songs*, Wm. Sandys, 1848.

² For the same theme as brought in through the Anglo-Norman, see the drinking-song, *ibid.*, p. 4 : —

“Or hi parra

La cervayse nos chantera,

Alleluia !”

³ *Ausgaben und Abhandlungen aus dem Gebiete der Romanischen Philologie*, xciv : *Les plus anciens Chansonniers Français*, par Jules Brakelman, Marburg, 1891.

Je nuls hons pris ne dira sa raison, — he upbraids in bitter terms the friends that have left him unrescued for two winters; in the other, — *Daupin, jeus voill deresnier*, — he repeats the reproach of desertion more particularly to the Dauphin and Count Guy. Like most *sirventes* these songs are very sincerely satiric; they have a remarkable vigor and swiftness that may be referred to Richard's own character. They are out of the line of the English lyric, however, and did not affect its development. Besides these art-lyrics of Richard's, a number of popular Norman songs must have been familiar in England. Some examples remain of hymns and carols;¹ perhaps more interesting is the pedler's song, *chanson de mercier*,² in which the wares are proclaimed in the cataloguing fashion familiar in many a later Autolycus: —

“Moult a ci bele compaignie,
 Merciers sui, si port mercerie
 Que je vendisse voluntiers,
 Quar je ai besoning de derniers,
 * * * * *
 J'ai les mignotes ceinturetes;
 J'ai beax ganz à demoiseletes,” etc.³

¹ For example, the carol: —

“Seignors ore entendez a nus,
 De loinz sumes venuz a vous
 Pur quere Noel,” etc.

— *Festive Songs*, Wm. Sandys, p. 6.

² *Songs and Poems on Costume*, Fred. W. Fairholt, *Percy Soc.*, London, 1849.

³ Translation: There is here a very fair company; I am a mercer, and carry mercery, which I would sell willingly, for I

Among the new themes in the English lyric should be mentioned the lullaby or slumber-song. It seems to go hand in hand with the adoration of the Virgin in Middle English poetry; in fact, even when there is no indication of a religious motive in the theme, we are made to suspect it by a certain reverent mood. When the lullaby is supposed to be sung by the Virgin, the theme invariably is one of pity for the poverty and sorrow into which the child is born:—

“Jesu, swete sone dere,
On thorful bed list thou here,
And that me greveth sore;
For thi cradel is ase a bere,
Oxe and asse beth thi fere;
Weope ich may tharfore.”¹

The same pessimistic attitude toward life appears in the ordinary lullaby. In one example the mother sings to her child that it rightly weeps on coming into this sad world; its forefathers wept also when they were alive.²

A less pleasant theme, which comes in at this

am in want of pence—I have pretty little girdles; I have fine gloves for little damsels, etc.

¹ *Political, Religious and Love Poems*. F. J. Furnivall, *Early Eng. Text Soc.*, 1866, p. 226.

² “Lollai, lollai little child whi wepestou so sore
Ned is mostou wepe: hit was iyarked the yore
Ever to lib in sorrow and sich and mourne ever
As thin eldren did er this whil hi alives were
Lollai little child; child lollai lollai
Into uncouth world icommen so ertow.”

—Quoted in Guest, p. 512.

time, is the satiric song against women. Though it was a conventional motive on the Continent, it does not seem to have made much impression on the English imagination; few examples of it remain. One of them is simply a string of clumsy insults, apparently of popular manufacture: —

“Ther were iii wyly, 3 wyly ther wer;
A fox, a fryr, and a woman,
Ther wer three angry, 3 angry ther wer;
A wasp, a wesyll, and a woman,” etc. ¹

The theme is more individually presented in the song of the hen-pecked husband, whose wife spends all his earnings and, when he complains, beats him. “Careful is my hart therefor!” is the refrain.²

The thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth are rich in love-songs, lyrics of native sentiment but of French brightness—the first expression of the favorite Elizabethan theme. If the Anglo-Saxon poem, the *Love-Letter*, be excluded from the class of lyric proper, the verses, “Blow, Northern Wynd,” are, as Warton said,³ the first English love-song. With it should be placed the first song of spring, “Sumer is icumen in.”⁴ Both songs have a native flavor and spontaneity not often found before the sixteenth-century lyrics. The second example introduces the bird-song as the sign of spring, a theme apparently native to all countries, but destined to become peculiarly characteristic of

¹ *Percy Soc.*, xxiii. p. 4. ² *Ibid.*, p. 26. ³ *Hist.*, i. p. 28.

⁴ *Ancient Songs and Ballads*, Jos. Ritson, 1792.

the English lyric. When the French influence makes itself felt, the themes of these two songs are usually blended; the song of the birds in springtime becomes the conventional stimulus of the lover's melancholy. A good example in refinement of emotion, musical verse, and elaborate stanza, is the song to Alyson: —

“Bytwene Mershe and Averil
When spray beginneth to springe.”¹

The four stanzas of this poem contain each an old theme, conventional already in the French lyric, however genuinely they are repeated here. In the first stanza the poet tells of the singing of the birds in spring; it rouses in him his old “love-longing” for Alyson. In the second stanza he describes Alyson's beauty in detail. In the third, he tells of his sleepless nights when he thinks of her. And in the last, he declares himself worn out by love, and begs mercy of Alyson. All these themes appear again, developed singly or together in later lyrics. It is characteristic of these songs,² that they are rather long, and introduce more than one lyric stimulus, as in each stanza of the example quoted, though all have a certain unity of mood. These French lyrics have also, perhaps because of their length, a tendency toward narrative; the poet, instead of revealing

¹ *Specimens of Lyric Poetry*, T. Wright, *Percy Soc.*, 1842.

² Cf. the song quoted and other examples in Morris and Skeat's *Specimens*, ii. p. 43.

his love directly in lyric enthusiasm, is likely to enlarge upon the situation until it is almost a story. The detailed beauty of the poet's mistress, as treated in the second stanza of the song to Alyson, becomes a favorite theme and method in the early Elizabethan period. A good example, however, is found at this time in another lyric of Edward I's reign—"Mosti ryden by Rybbesdale."¹ After a short narrative introduction, the poet enters into a minute and enthusiastic catalogue of his lady's charms, the enthusiasm furnishing the lyrical quality.

Among the very few elegies or funeral-songs of this period should be mentioned the one quoted by Warton, on the death of Edward I.² The only conventional note in it is the reproach of death, after the pattern of the French funeral-plaint, though here it is condensed in a few lines:—

"A knight that wes so stronge
Of whom God hath donne ys wille;
Methincketh that Deth has don us wronge
That he so soon shall ligge stille."

The elegy is made up of references to incidents of Edward's reign and death, and hails the new king, "Edward of Carnarvon," with the wish that he may be no worse man than his father. The poem is remarkable for its lack of conventionality, its genuineness, and its strong sense of personality.

¹ *Songs of Edward I's Reign*, T. Wright, Percy Soc., 1842.

² *History*, i. p. 106.

It expresses devotion to Edward as an individual, and the expression comes from an individual, not from the nation.

The strong national feeling under Edward III comes into literature through the work of Lawrence Minot. His battle-songs,¹ taken together, form a unique picture of the aggressive side of contemporary English character, and individually each poem shows some clear-cut phase of patriotic prejudice. That kind of patriotism that looks upon its country as the land pleasing to God, the home of the chosen people, is strong in Minot; all his battles properly begin with a summons to the Deity to arise and scatter the wicked,² and he generally ascribes satisfactory results to such prayers. At times his national enthusiasm declines into a mere delight in revenge, as in the songs to the Scotch³; at other times he seems conscious of the strength of a united country, as in the song on the sea-fight at Sluys, which describes the deeds of his countrymen from all parts of England.⁴ In quality his songs are choric; they seem to be sung by Edward's army. The one personal note apparently is Minot's uneasy solicitude for the welfare of England:—

“ Minot with mowth had menid to make
Suth sawes and sad for sum mens sake ;

¹ *Lawrence Minot's Poems*, Joseph Hall, Clarendon Press, 1887.

² *Ibid.*, No. iv.

³ *Ibid.*, Nos. i, ii.

⁴ *Ibid.*, No. v.

The words of sir Edward makes me to wake,
Wald he salve us sone mi sorrow suld slake ;
Were mi sorrow slaked sone wald I sing ;
When God will sir Edward sal us bute bring.”¹

Minot's work has the mark of the popular ballad in its simple rhythm, its inaccurate recital of facts, due to strong prejudice, and in its large use of alliterative formulas taken from the popular romances.² They suggest the best Elizabethan street-ballads, but they have far more artistic condensation and vigor.

The note that Minot adds to the English lyric is the praise of achievement—usually, but not always, national achievement. Edward, to him, is the ideal of prowess, an ideal which in the land-fights he images in the wild boar, and in the sea-fights he represents by the imposing figure of the largest battleship, the *Christopher*. The ideal is a heartless one, for the England that Minot glorified was bound on expeditions of foreign conquest; the themes of his song lack the sanction of a noble purpose, like the desperate defence of homes, as in the *Battle of Brunanburh*. But the pure love of battle was present also in the earlier poem, and is rooted in the national temperament; it is objectionable in Minot only because he treats it narrowly, blind to the broader national life that interested Chaucer.

It is not out of place to mention the flowering of

¹ *Lawrence Minot's Poems*, No. v. ² *Ibid.*, cf. Introduction.

lyric poetry in Wales at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Up to this time the traditions of Celtic literature were preserved in their vigor, and the prejudice against the English did not altogether keep out the good influences of European culture. Indeed, the Welsh poets, almost as soon as the English, had the advantage of travel and study abroad. But in the fourteenth century, after the union with England, the bards crossed the border, and for the most part degenerated into wandering minstrels; and whatever influence the Welsh line of poetry had developed was merged in the general strain of English literature.¹ Just what these influences were has never been determined, but the interesting fact in the history of the English lyric is that several of the Welsh poets, at the very period of consolidation, had attained to a degree of Italian and French culture not surpassed by any poets in England; they possibly were an important channel of the inspiration that from this time to Elizabethan days moulded the lyric. Chief of the Welsh poets is David Ap Gwilym (*circa* 1340–1400), who travelled in Italy and France, became well acquainted with the literature of those countries, and brought back with him many of their themes. One in particular is memorable, since it foreshadows the famous *chanson d'aube* in *Romeo and Juliet*, "It is the nightingale, and not the lark," etc. Gwilym,

¹ *Hist. of Lit. of Wales*, Chas. Wilkins, Ph.D., Cardiff, 1884, p. 13.

following the old French form, as Shakspeare does, employs the dialogue between the anxious lover and his lady, *Morvudd* : —

“ *Morvudd*. My accomplished love, gentle and amiable, we shall hear, ere it dawns, the song of the loud clear voice of the stately cock !

David. What if the jealous churl (the husband) should come in before the dawn appears ?

Morvudd. David, speak of a more agreeable subject. Faint, alas ! and gloomy are thy hopes.

David. My charmer, bright as the fields that glitter with the gossamer, I perceive daylight through the crevice of the door.

Morvudd. It is the new moon and the twinkling stars and the reflection of their beams on the pillar.

David. Ho ! my charmer, bright as the sun, by all that's sacred, it has been day this hour.

Morvudd. Then if thou art so inconstant, follow thy inclinations and depart.”¹

One of the peculiarities of Welsh poetry was that the last word of one line was often made the initial word of the next.² This kind of “link-verse,” with its many varieties, is constantly found in English poetry from this time on. Minot employs a linked stanza, beginning each stanza with the last phrase of the preceding one, and sometimes linking verses within the stanza by the repetition of phrases. Other examples will be noticed as they appear, until Daniel's sonnets are reached, in which often the last line of one is the first line of the next.

¹ Jones, *Bardic Museum*, p. 43.

² Wilkins, p. 28.

III

Chaucer's lyrics divide themselves into two classes: the lyrics of French and Italian verse-form, including the ballades, rondels, and plaints; and the short, incidental songs in his narrative poems. These last are very interesting. Not only do they illustrate the first artistic use of incidental songs in our literature, but they may be considered a term in the development of the Elizabethan use of lyrics in romances and the drama. It is a commonplace of literary history that in early art-forms, lyrical, narrative, and dramatic methods are often mingled, and that these different species tend to develop each its own quality and to separate. At first the lyric has an organic place in the narrative or drama; in time it becomes more and more decorative; it is finally dispensed with. The phenomenon has its familiar dramatic illustrations in the evolution of the Greek chorus, and in the songs of Elizabethan plays.¹ The combination of the lyric and narrative has excellent examples in English literature; the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* makes an organic use of lyrics to tell a story—as of the *Battle of Brunanburh*. Chaucer finds his songs embedded in the social life which he portrays, and puts them into his story to make the portrait true to nature. The Elizabethans use lyrics in the romances for

¹ For a notable use of incidental songs, cf. the *Faerie Queene*, especially bk. ii. canto xii. st. 74.

purely decorative purposes, and prefer to keep the species separate. It will not be out of place to notice in advance, that after the lyric has disengaged itself from the other species, it sometimes tends to revert to them; as when it forms itself into a series of songs, like the sonnet-cycles — lyric units organized for a narrative or dramatic effect.

But though Chaucer finds his incidental songs in the life of his time, strangely enough he gives them a different form from what they would have worn if actually sung in those days. The world of chivalry was French and Italian; the lyric of chivalry followed French and Italian models. When Chaucer himself writes a lyric outside of a romance, he adopts the conventional forms. But in the incidental songs of the narratives, he allows himself absolute freedom, expressing his emotion simply, with the least possible proportion of intellectual structure. The effect produced is one of spontaneity and lightness, somewhat like that found in the early songs — “Blow, Northern Wynd,” and “Sumer is icumen in,” mentioned above, and closely resembling the most apparent characteristics of the Elizabethan lyric. A good example is in the *Book of the Duchess* (lines 1175–1181), where the mourner, telling the poet of his wooing, repeats a song made for his lady. The intellectual element is very slight; the lyric stimulus is the swift reference to the lady’s beauty, and the emotional attitude of mind is expressed as swiftly in the wish for her favor:—

“ Lord, hit maketh myn herte light,
Whan I thenke on that swete wight
That is so semely on to see ;
And wisshe to God hit might so be,
That she wolde holde me for hir knight,
My lady, that is so fair and bright ! ”¹

The earlier song in the same poem, lines 475–486, though longer, shows the same freedom of spirit, and is more varied in riming-system. In subject, however, it is conventional, modelled closely upon the French plaint, with its upbraiding of Death.

These qualities of spontaneity and lightness show even more strikingly in the numerous bird-songs throughout Chaucer's poems. In these short lyric bursts, usually but a verse or two in length, the poet attempts to translate into words the inarticulate delirium of birds in spring. The songs are all dramatic, in the sense that Chaucer is trying to express himself through the character of larks and thrushes; and since he is reproducing the vague, emotional effect of joy, without any intellectual intent, the only elements in the songs are exuberance and brightness of emotion. This joyous note is a new one in the English lyric, for which Chaucer is probably indebted to France; it remains, however, an ideal of later song-writing. One of the best examples is the expression, by a dramatic form of imagination, of the pride of the birds that had survived the winter:—

¹ *Chaucer's Works*, W. W. Skeat, Oxford Press, 1892, p. 95. As Chaucer is using the couplet rime, he rimes his song *aabbcc*, thus securing an effect of unity and almost of stanzaic form.

"This was hir song — 'The fouler we defeys,
And all his craft !' " ¹

As in the songs from the *Book of the Duchess*, Chaucer here makes no attempt to exhaust the lyric emotion, or even to develop it. This absence of conscious structure, though out of keeping with the art-forms then popular, according to later ideas leaves the song-quality unimpaired and makes these fragments seem more modern than the ballades and the complaints.

The use of incidental lyrics is old in other literatures; a familiar illustration is the number of songs in Theocritus. Chaucer was the first English poet to employ the effect, and he probably modelled his use upon the French fabliaux. In Italian literature, it is true, incidental lyrics are found; but here the songs are formal, whereas in the fabliaux they are of the simpler, more spontaneous quality, as in Chaucer.²

¹ Prologue to *Legend of Good Women*, *Complete Works*, p. 353, l. 137. The same effect is repeated a few lines further on, by a more human image:—

"In hir delyt, they turned hem ful ofte,
And songen, 'blessed be seynt Valentyn!
For on this day I chees yow to be myn,
Withouten repenting, myn herte swete!'" — l. 141.

² Cf. the three songs in the *Lai d'Aristote*, especially the second:—

"Ci me retient amorettes,
Douce trop vous aim,
Ci me tienent amorettes,
Ou je tieng ma main."

— *Fabliaux et Contes*. Barbazan, Paris, 1808, iii. p. 107.

Another portion of Chaucer's lyrics suggests in spirit the Elizabethan age. In the lover's plaints, such as the one in *Anelida and Arcite*,¹ the mood and tone suggest the later sonnet-series. The subject-matter in both is the same, and the manner nearly identical. In this particular example, the stanzas, of nine lines each, are sharply separated, giving the effect of a cycle. Each stanza is a lyric in itself, and serves as a link between other units. The Renaissance in England had but to furnish an inviting vehicle of expression, like the sonnet, in order to revive, not introduce, the lyric mood most characteristic of the Elizabethan period.

The number of lyrics that Chaucer puts in the form of letters should also be noted. This convention, reminiscent of the Anglo-Saxon poem, the *Love-Letter*, and surviving well into the Elizabethan period, is a favorite with Chaucer; some examples of it are, the complaint that Anelida writes to Arcite,² the letter from Troilus to Criseyde,³ and its reply.⁴

The portion of Chaucer's lyrics most often noticed, the French ballade and rondel forms, is not important in the later development of the lyric. It was a temporary fashion, and so far failed to take hold of English poetry, that Chaucer himself rarely followed the forms strictly. Gower set the fashion for the ballade with his *Cinquante*

¹ *Works*, p. 116.

² *Ibid.*, p. 116.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 317.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

Balades, a series of French love-poems.¹ It is at once apparent, on comparing these with Chaucer's ballades, that the obligation for the refrain and the envoy is not binding on the latter poet.² Of the ten examples found in Chaucer's works, seven employ the refrain,³ six have the envoy,⁴ and only three have both.⁵ The riming-system is usually the same for every stanza, but two envoys are made on different rimes from the rest of the ballade. The rime-royal is the favorite stanza-form; the cognate system, *ababbcb*, however, seems also to be Chaucer's ideal of the ballade measure. The verses in all the ballades are pentapodies. In Gower's ballades, as in Chaucer's English examples, the tendency of the form toward stereotyped expression is evident; Chaucer's ballades have more of the spontaneity of his incidental songs.

Chaucer has four rondels, all on the same system.⁶ They are eight lines long; after the second stave, the first two lines are repeated as the refrain, and after the third stave, the entire first stanza is repeated, giving the system, *ABB, ABab, ABBabb*.

¹ *Works*, G. C. Macaulay, Oxford, 1901.

² Guest, p. 635. "The envoy prevailed most in the fourteenth and the burthen in the fifteenth century."

³ Cf. *Balade to Truth*, p. 122.

⁴ Cf. *Womanly Noblesse*, p. 129.

⁵ Cf. *Truth*, p. 122, *Steadfastness*, p. 123, and *Complaint to his Purse*, p. 126.

⁶ *Merciless Beauté*, p. 121, and *Parlement of Foules*, p. 110.

On the same plan, evidently, is built the incomplete rondel that Arcite sings:¹—

“May, with alle thy floures and thy grene,
Wel-come be thou, faire fresshe May,
I hope that I som grene gete may.”

Chaucer himself calls it a rondel in line 671.

The rondel of thirteen verses has no example in English of this period. The rondel of ten verses, however, is charmingly used by Charles d'Orléans in his English poems. He uses the first two lines as a refrain, on the system, *ABBA*, *ABab*, *ABBAab*, as in the verses:—

“My ghostly father ! I me confess,
First to God, and then to you,
That at a window, wot ye how !
I stole a kiss of great sweetness !
Which done was out avisinesse.
But it is done ; not undone now !
My ghostly father . . .
First to . . .
But I restore it shall doubtless
Again, if so be that I mow !
And that God I make a vow,
And else I ask forgiveness.
My ghostly . . .
First to . . .”²

Lydgate follows the same model in the rondel on the coronation of Henry VI, “Rejoice, ye realms of England and of France.”³ With this one exception, Lydgate's shorter poems have neither the

¹ *Knights Tale*, l. 652, p. 438.

² Arber Anthologies, the *Dunbar Anthology*, London, 1901, p. 122.

³ Quoted in Guest, p. 646.

emotional development nor the unity of the lyric. They incline to be narrative or satiric ballads. Of this characteristic side of his genius, the familiar illustration is the vigorous ballad *London Lick-penny*.¹

Thomas Oceleve, Lydgate's contemporary, also has little lyric gift. He wrote a number of so-called ballades, such as the *Balade to my gracious Lord of York*,² all of which are complimentary epistolary addresses. They lack the ballade structure, having neither refrain nor envoy. More successful on the formal side is the rondel called *Chaneson to Somer*,³ which follows Chaucerian models.

The religious songs of this period may be divided into three classes: the direct addresses to God or to Mary; lyrics on some biblical subject, such as the crucifixion; and dramatic songs, in which Christ or the Virgin speaks, sometimes both in dialogue. Of the first class, the earlier songs to the Virgin already quoted will still serve as typical examples. The second class, those lyrics written on some episode in the life of Christ, have several realistic pieces in this period. They show an advance in lyric art, a more condensed mode of expression, occasionally individual touches of great power. A good example is the song, "I sigh when I sing,"⁴ in

¹ *Minor Poems*, J. O. Halliwell, 1840, *Percy Soc.*, ii. p. 103.

² *Minor Poems*, F. J. Furnivall, 1892, *Early Eng. Text Soc.*, xli. p. 49.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁴ *England's Antiphon*, George MacDonald, p. 11.

which the story of the crucifixion is told. The poem differs from earlier treatments of the same theme by discarding narrative elements, and fixing the attention upon the picture of Christ on the cross. This picture is the stimulus of the poet's lyric emotion, and is kept before the reader's eyes by frequent references, as if from time to time he should turn to look at a painting, and then express the emotions occasioned by the sight of it. The details of the picture are carefully worked out; for example, the cross is described as set up in a pile of stones which become splashed with the dripping blood.

The third class, the dramatic songs, are represented in their simplest form by an appeal from Christ to man to show more gratitude for his redemption. This kind of lyric runs too easily into religious dogma, and few examples of it deserve to be called lyrics. One early example, however, is better than the average. It seems to have two forms; in one Christ, and in the other the Virgin, plead with man not to refuse their love. The substance of both forms is the same, and both use the refrain—"Quia Amore Languet."¹ A better example, which may be anticipated here, is Skelton's lyric, *Wofully Araid*,² in which Christ is the speaker, with the usual theme. A more compli-

¹ *Political, Religious, and Love Poems*, F. J. Furnivall, p. 150.

² *Poems*, Rev. Alexander Dyce, i. p. 141.

cated form of these dramatic songs is that in which both Christ and the Virgin speak. The best example is the song:—

“Stand well, moder, under rood;
Beholde thy son with glade mood,
Blithe mother may'st thou be!
Son, how should I blithe stand?
I see thy feet, I see thy hand
Nailed to the hard tree.”¹

In each stanza Christ continues to address Mary in the first half of the strophe, and her answer is given in the other half. The song is almost as dramatic as some of the early mysteries; and it may be that the imagination of these fifteenth-century religious poets received its realistic and dramatic force from the sight of the old themes on the stage.

Robert Henryson's *Robene and Makyne*,² the first pastoral in the language, as it has been called, deserves a place in the history of English lyrics, though it is the work of a Scotch poet; for it sounds the typical note of the early Elizabethan poetry. The subject is the perennial one of the *débat*, the dialogue of the wooing lover and the heartless lady. Henryson gets two situations from the theme, first by making the lady woo in vain, and then by letting the lover change his mind, when it is too late. The swiftness of the song and the rhythm—alternating lines of four and three ac-

¹ *England's Antiphon*, p. 9. ² *Dunbar Anthology*, p. 146.

cents—suggest the popular ballad; the poem is indeed an art-version of that form. It is strongly marked by humor,—the humor of love,—without any cynicism or lack of sympathy. The subject of pastoral love, and this flavor of humor in the treatment, are the two elements in which the poem foreshadows the Elizabethan lyrics.

A no less vigorous, though sometimes less delicate, exponent of humor and lyric power, is found in England in John Skelton. It is too much to see in him an early Elizabethan, as some have done; his qualities on the whole are those of his time. In the elegy on the death of Edward IV,¹ he uses conventional subject-matter, the frailty of human greatness, etc.; but he escapes the reproach of perfunctoriness by adopting the dramatic method of the religious song, and making Edward speak for himself. Some of his lyrics echo the old satiric songs against woman; such are "Womanhood, wanton ye want,"² and "My darling dere, my daysy floure."³ They have an astonishing vigor and humor, and inevitably suggest the longer satiric poems of the same poet. A more interesting group of Skelton's lyrics, however, are parts of *Philipe Sparrow*,⁴ and the songs to ladies in the *Garland of Laurell*.⁵ These have the grace of Chaucer's incidental lyrics; their daintiness is surprising in comparison with the man's other

¹ *Poems*, i. p. 1.

² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 361.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

work. A fair illustration is the song to Margery Wentworthe:—

“ With Margerain ientyll,
The flower of goodly hede.
Embrowdered the mantill
Is of your maydenhede.
Plainly I cannot glose
Ye be, as I deveyne,
The praty primrose,
The goodly columbine.
With Margerain ientyll,” etc.¹

Skelton is the last lyric poet of any consequence before Surrey and Wyatt. In many respects he is a follower of Chaucer, like his contemporaries; but they, as a rule, incline more to Chaucer's narrative and allegorical vein. Of these poets Dunbar seems the most important; though the intention of much of his work is narrative, he has considerable lyric quality. His poem, the *Merle and the Night-ingale*, for example, is a fine lyric, though the few introductory stanzas are not. This song is interesting as a development of Chaucer's ballade-forms. It has two alternating refrains, but no envoy; the refrains are made typical of the bird that sings them, like the alternating refrains of the *Nut-brown Maid*. The stanza-form is *ababbcbc*, which, as we saw before, is identified with Chaucer's ballade-measures. The religious subject-matter is characteristic of the contemporary verse in general, and especially of Dunbar. It appears again in the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 398.

song, "Now cooled is Dame Venus' brand,"¹ with its effective refrain of two lines. The same love of refrains is seen in the ballade on London, which shows Dunbar's love of the city in rather uninspired words.² It employs the same Chaucerian ballade-measure as the *Merle and the Nightingale*, with a refrain, but no envoy. The *Lament for the Makaris*³ illustrates a dignified use of a short line (four accents) and a short stanza (three lines, with Latin refrain). Its elevation of mood and the short movement of its verse recall the *Dies Irae*. In the *Thistle and the Rose*⁴ we have ample opportunity to judge Dunbar by Chaucer's lyric methods. The poem is an allegory of birds and flowers (like the *Parlement of Foules*), to celebrate the marriage of Margaret of England and James IV of Scotland. There are incidental bird-songs and flower-songs, as when the lark sings his *chanson d'aubade*: —

"Awake, Lovers, out of your slumbering !
See how the lusty morrow does upspring !"

But the point of view is human; in none of the bird-songs does Dunbar express the joy of the birds dramatically, as Chaucer does; we are made to feel that he is using them for an allegory, not for a picture of nature.

The only other lyric expression to be found in the narrative works of this period is in Stephen

¹ *Dunbar Anthology*, p. 46.

² *Ibid.*, p. 31.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

Hawes' *Pastime of Pleasure*. A lyric effect is obtained throughout this narrative allegory, by making the hero tell his own story. But several parts are more especially lyric, as the commendation of Gower, Chaucer, and Lydgate, in chapter xiv., and the epilogue, or *Excusation of the Author*.¹ This last is one of those familiar addresses to the reader, commending the book, which later became frequent in Elizabethan poetry.

In this chapter only the more significant lyrics of the Middle English period have been mentioned. Several narrative poems with notable lyrical quality have been passed over, because their influence upon the later lyric is slight. The illustration that will readily occur to the reader is the *Pearl*.² For innumerable other examples the reader is referred to the familiar collections of the *Early English Text Society* and of the *Percy Society*, and for charming examples of carols, to the fourth volume of the *Warton Club Publications*.³

¹ *Percy Soc.*, xviii. p. 220.

² *Early Eng. Allit. Poems*, R. Morris, 1864, *Early Eng. Text Soc.*, i. p. 1. Edited separately, I. Gollancz, 1891.

³ *Songs and Carols*, Thomas Wright, 1856.

CHAPTER III

LYRIC THEMES AND LYRICAL QUALITY IN THE MISCELLANIES

I

THE Elizabethan lyric first presented itself to the public in the popular collections called *Miscellanies*. The first printed collection of this kind, *Tottel's Miscellany*, 1557, is usually reckoned the starting-point of the great lyric era. But both the themes of the songs and the mode of publishing had their roots deep-set in the earlier literature. The habit of making manuscript collections of favorite songs for convenience in singing was very common during the early part of the Tudor period, and perhaps earlier. Four or five examples are preserved, and show clearly the connection between the old lyric and the new.¹ The largest collection is particularly valuable because it contains several pieces by Henry VIII. On account of its importance it will be considered first.

Since the birth of Prince Henry, in 1511, is

¹ *Liedersammlungen der XVI Jahrhundert*, besonders aus der Zeit Heinrich's VIII, Flügel, *Anglia*, xii. p. 225. A few of the songs, with facsimiles of the music, can be found in an article by Wm. Chappell in *Archæologia*, xli. pt. ii. p. 371.

mentioned in one of the songs, the manuscript is assigned to the year immediately after. It should be remembered that this collection belonged to a gentleman of rank, perhaps to the king, and it reflects his tastes, not those of the average man. Some of the songs are signed;¹ the others may be old compositions, or the work of contemporary writers; one evidently is a version of a song by Sir Thomas Wyatt.² Though the familiar themes of the Middle English lyric are represented, they show a double change, due to the effect of time and to the narrower range of emotions in which the court gentleman found enjoyment. This narrowing of the lyric theme is illustrated by the patriotic song, which shows already, in the three examples of this collection, a change from love of country to loyalty to the king;³ there is even a suggestion of the courtly compliment, so conspicuous under Elizabeth and the Stuarts. The one war-song in the collection, "England, be glad, pluck up thy lusty hart," referring to the approaching war of 1513 with the French, is far removed from the old fighting spirit; it is an attempt to rouse enthusiasm, instead of being an involuntary expression of it.⁴

The second class of songs on old themes, includes the songs of moral or gnomie character.

¹ Fourteen are by Henry VIII, ten by William Cornysh, four by Ffardyng, and four by Dr. Cooper, two by Ffluyd, and one each by Wm. Daggere, Rysbye, and Pygott.

² "A robyn, gentle robin," *Anglia*, xii. p. 241.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 250.

Their range is greatly narrowed ; there are no mortuary songs among them on the shortness of life or the vanity of beauty. They are shorter also and more epigrammatic than the popular version of such precepts. They deal with courtly bits of wisdom, such as the *Praise of Sincerity in Love*,¹ and the *Praise of Virtuous Youth*,² yet without losing the native gnomic manner. Many of these are signed with Henry's name, and one cannot help noticing how he recurs to what is evidently his favorite theme—the praise of sincerity in wooing and the scorn of all trifling in love:—

“ Whoso that wyll for grace sew,
Hys intent must nedys be trew,
And love her in hart and dede,
Els it war pyte that he should spede.”³

There is nothing new or surprising in Henry's point of view, but in another song he gives a characteristic reason for disliking double-dealing in love; the insincere gallant, he says, does great harm, for he prevents better men from making love to the lady:—

“ For often tymes when they do sewe,
They hinder lovers that wolde be trew.”⁴

Religious poems are represented in this collection by only one song. It is a lullaby sung by the Virgin to the Child. The refrain is in Latin, and the song, after the old manner of introducing such

¹ *Anglia*, xii. p. 238.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 248.

² *Ibid.*, p. 233.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

themes, is supposed to be overheard by the poet. The poet evidently fears, however, that the lyric may be mistaken for an ordinary slumber-song, and to prevent such an error, adds a few verses in a different rhythm, to explain that he refers to the holy family.¹

This manuscript contains also a large number of English love-plaints, and some half dozen in French, repeating the traditional mood of this kind of song. They are much simpler, however, than Chaucer's handling of the same theme. In this respect they are nearer the form of the practical song. They turn upon one situation which is not elaborated nor more than adequately expressed; in one parting-song there are but two lines, which the manuscript says should be sung three times in order to piece out the tune:—

“Departure is my chief paine,
I trust ryght wel of retorne agane.”²

The theme of farewell at parting and the pleadings of unrequited love furnish the bulk of these complaints with subject-matter. The only point to be noticed is the bare way in which these conventional situations are expressed; the emotional color is left for the music to supply.

The new themes in this miscellany give evidence both of a growing native strain in the lyric, and of the influence of that Romance pastoral element which marked the first years of Elizabethan poetry.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

² *Ibid.*, p. 243.

The English strain is seen in the hunting-songs, of which there are several, in the spring-songs, and in one sturdy lyric of the holly and ivy. These are all expressive of a life of boisterous good-humor and feasting, of the spirit of "Merry England." No doubt the song-makers of Henry's court had more of a holiday-time than the rank and file of poets. The king himself, in the famous song that heads the collection, says:—

"Pastime with good company,
I love and shall until I die."¹

In accordance with this spirit, the hunting-songs have little substance except the general atmosphere of the sport, got mainly from the repetition of cheerful phrases like, "Blow ye horn, hunter," and "Sore the dere stricken is."² Their lack of art suggests that they have been transcribed unchanged from the familiar life of the hunt.

The same fresh spirit gives importance to the spring-songs, though their theme is as old as lyric poetry. Their method of construction is simple—merely a catalogue of familiar spring images, young buds, red roses and white, and the song of birds.³ They have little verbal melody or art; as in all true songs, the words are adequate to express the lyric motive, and the emotion is largely supplied by the music. The same construction is apparent in the *Song of the Holly*, though here the theme is

¹ *Anglia*, xii. p. 230.

² *Ibid.*, p. 238. ³ "In may that lusty season," *ibid.*, p. 232.

new — a single love motive, expressed entirely in English images : —

“Grene growth ye holy so doth ye Ive
Thow wynter blastys blow never so hye.
As the holy growth grene
And never changeth hew,
So I am — ever hath been
Unto my lady true.”¹

The Romance influence is seen in several songs, but chiefly in one minute imitation of the *pastourelle*. In the conventional version of this Romance form the poet meets a woman (usually a shepherdess) and pleads for her love; she argues the case with him and finally gives in or not as she chooses; sometimes her brother or her father happens along, and puts a quick end to the poet's wooing. The argument between the lover and the woman, the *débat*, is the lyrical part of the poem, and the most important.² For the oldest Romance example of it, it is customary to refer to the *Contrasto* of Cielo d' Alcorno, though an earlier example of the whole

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

² Cf. the *débat* between a knight and a shepherdess, from a French *pastourelle*, published in *Altfranzösische Romanzen und Pastourelles*, Bartsch, p. 121 : —

“When I approached her, I said: ‘Sister, if you will love me, honor thereof shall you have all your life.’

“‘Sir, mock me not! Well may you find women enough to love, richer and better clad than I.’

“‘Fair one, in love I care not for lordship; good sense pleases me, and beauty, whereof you have no lack, and sweet company.’

“‘You speak folly, for you shall have none of it; for another man is betrothed to have my love. If you do not re-

species is the twenty-seventh idyl of Theocritus. In this English imitation, the poet meets a shepherdess, and offers to accompany her to the meadow; she refuses his society, and when he makes his intentions of love more plain, threatens to summon her mother, who is near by. Finally the poet is convinced of the futility of his suit and leaves her. The first stanza points unmistakably to the origin of the innocent-sounding nursery-rime, "Where are you going, my pretty maid?"

"A. Hey trolly loly lo! maid, whither go you?

B. I go to the meadow to milk my cow.

A. Then at the meadow I will you meet,

To gather ye flowers both fair and sweet.

B. Nay, God forbid, it may not be!

I wysse my mother then shall us see," etc.¹

The important thing to be learned from this collection as a whole is the way in which song-words are constructed, when they are considered

mount and ride quickly from here, I shall be ill-treated if Perrin should spy us. And many shepherds would come to his aid if he should call.'

"'Fair one, fear it not, but hearken to me; you speak great folly.'

"'Sir, at least I beg that you have pity on me; if I remain here, I shall be ill scoffed at.'

"'Fair one, I promise you, if you take me for your love, no one will be so bold as to say to you any insult. For the love of God, be my sweet friend!'

"'Sir, speak no more of it; for what I saw in Limoges on Wednesday, I will not trust you.'

"'Shepherdess, so be it! Fool am I to plead with you longer. No joy ever came from long fiddling,' etc."

¹ *Anglia*, xii. p. 255.

not as poems but as material for musical setting. This miscellany, while forming a natural link between the old and the new literary themes of the lyric, is of most interest as representing an era of practical song. The pieces, as in some cases we have noticed, turn always on one situation as a lyric stimulus, have usually the simplest construction, and do not attempt to express all the emotion in the words; the words are felt to be incomplete without the music. In three cases there are no words at all, merely syllables, such as "Hey, nony, nony," on which to vocalize the notes. The contrast between this true song-lyric and the literary lyric in the song-books, is striking. In this miscellany the words and the music are of equal importance, and the interest is divided between them. In the song-books either the songs are poems, quite satisfactory without the notes, or else some clever part-writing in the music makes the singers satisfied with any words, and the two arts rarely serve each other equally.

The second manuscript in importance, though the earliest in time, belongs probably to the first decade of the sixteenth century, a few years before the Henry VIII collection.¹ The lyrics in this manuscript do not reflect the court at all, but follow rather the popular taste. There is one patriotic song, in honor of the marriage of Princess Margaret with James IV, of Scotland, in 1503. These verses, though

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

naturally complimentary, sound no servile note, nor do they betray any taint of flattery; it is the general joy of the public at the union of Scotland and England that gives the theme importance.¹

The love-plaints are fairly well represented, but differ from those in the first collection in being more elaborate in treatment, with less of the practical song-quality. The gnomic verses appear in but one form, a bit of moralizing on the mutability of fortune—"The wheel of fortune, who can hold?"² Those pieces in the first manuscript in which syllables like "Hey, nony, nony" were made to do duty for the whole song, have their nearest parallel in the second, in a catch, "Nay mary, nay mary, I peter, but ye must," etc.,³ a kind of song that is ideal in one sense, because it must be executed orally to be understood at all.

The religious lyrics appear in two familiar forms: a penitential hymn to the Saviour,⁴ and a dialogue between Mary and Christ.⁵ In this latter poem the old dramatic dialogue is combined with the theme of the Virgin singing a lullaby to her child. The poet in a dream overhears the slumber-song, in which Mary, saddened as usual by the poverty of the Saviour's birth, asks Him why He came into the world so poor. He answers that if she will wait awhile, she will see the kings come to worship Him.

¹ *Anglia*, xii. p. 265.

² *Ibid.*, p. 269.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 265.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 270.

In this general class of songs we may perhaps include a satiric song against a friar,¹ written with Latin verses as refrains — an expression of a popular prejudice familiar in narrative poetry, such as Chaucer's, but not often found in the lyric.

There is but one spring-song in the collection, and that not so English as the versions of the same theme in the first manuscript. It follows Middle English models in elaborateness and in the conventional setting; the poet tells, with some detail, how, while he was lying on a bank, half dreaming, he heard a bird sing the approach of spring, and warn all young men that the season of love was at hand.²

The length and elaboration of such pieces as this show that here we have, not a collection of practical songs, but a mixture of singable lyrics, and of poems that would do as well without music. Such especially are the number of epigrammatic pieces of double meaning, which require for their success the hearer's full attention to the words. With the exception of the catch, most of the songs are interesting in themselves, and elaborated for literary effect. The collection, differing in this respect from the Henry VIII manuscript, is much nearer the first printed miscellanies; and in the spirit of its themes, as we have seen, it shows no influence of the early poets, but follows the traditional taste of the people.

The third miscellany³ is a small collection of

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

² *Ibid.*, p. 264.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 587.

Christmas carols published by Wynkyn de Worde in 1521. These express, not only the religious sentiment of the season, but also a certain court atmosphere of ceremony and elaborate good cheer. For example, there is a hunting-song, much more highly wrought than those of the first manuscript, and less true to the hearty mood of the sport.¹ Another carol, one of the first songs on Christmas customs, is the familiar "Caput apri differo," on the bringing in of the boar's head.² Midway between the song of Christmas customs and the true religious song, is the carol of welcome to Christmas and farewell to the season of Advent. The typical religious lyric is the song on the birth of Christ, after the old model of Middle English narrative themes.³ All the songs in this collection are art-lyrics, written with most attention upon the words; the absence of the music is not felt at all.

The fourth miscellany, dating about 1530, is interesting for the variety of its subjects.⁴ Almost all the themes in the other collections are represented here, though in some cases the treatment is new. The religious songs have numerous examples, more than in the other manuscripts. Omitting a setting of the Lord's Prayer, we have four pieces of this kind; a hymn of praise,⁵ in alternate English and Latin lines, riming, two songs of adora-

¹ *Anglia*, xii. p. 587.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 589.

² *Ibid.*, p. 587.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 587.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 588.

tion addressed to the Virgin,¹ and one description of Mary singing to the Child.² The love-plaints, also, appear in forms noticed before — protestations of devotion and parting-songs. Under this general class would come an example of the *débat*, or argument between lovers, somewhat as defined in the *pastourelle* of the first manuscript; a lover proposes marriage to his lady, who, after long argument, accepts him.³ Since the pleasure of such a poem is intellectual rather than emotional, and can be got most easily from the unaccompanied words, the musical setting is, of course, unimportant. The spring-song is represented by a piece in praise of the singing of birds — rather a perfunctory performance, without any individual note.⁴ The patriotic poem has for illustration one extraordinary song of royal flattery, in which the poet, reclining upon a bank, hears the birds summon England to awake and thank God for their noble king, the Defender of the Faith, etc.⁵

The fifth manuscript belongs to the same time, although much of its contents was probably composed in the last years of the fifteenth century.⁶ The scribe, Richard Hill, luckily recorded the birthdays of his family on a spare leaf of the manuscript; since the youngest child registered was born in 1526, the copy was certainly made later.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 591.

² *Ibid.*, p. 596.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 597.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 590.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 595.

⁶ *Anglia*, xxvi. p. 94, Ewald Flügel.

The collection contains much narrative verse and miscellaneous prose. The lyrics, however, may be divided into three classes — moral or philosophic, religious, and humorous. The philosophical lyric deals chiefly with such themes as the fickleness of fortune. An interesting illustration is the poem in French, perhaps part of a ballade, on the old motive *ubi sunt*, familiar to us in Villon's *Ballade of Dead Ladies*:—

“Fortune, ou est David, et Salomon,
Mathusale, Josue, Machabee,
Olofernes, Alexandre, et Sampson,
Tulles Cesar, Hector, Ausy Pompee,
Ou est Ulyxes, et sa grant renommee,
Artur le roy, Godefroy, Charlemaine,
Daries le grant, Hercules, Tholomee ?

Ils sont tous mors, le monde est chose vaine.”¹

It is evident at once from this quotation that here we have the literary lyric without any suggestion of musical accompaniment. This is true of all the poems on philosophical subjects.

Some of the religious lyrics also have no need of musical setting. There are the usual addresses to the Virgin and penitential hymns to Christ. A new theme is introduced with the prayers to the guardian angel — a religious conception which had become familiar in the Moralities, and which later furnishes a striking image to the sonneteers:—

“O Angell dere wher ever I goo
Me that am comytted to thyne awarde,

¹ *Anglia*, p. 142.

Save, defende and govern also,
That in hewyn with thee be my rewardes !

* * * * *

O thou cumly Angell, so gude and clere,
Yat ever art abydyng with me,
Though I may nother the se nor here,
Yet devoutely with trust I pray to the !”¹

The cradle-song of the Saviour appears in several versions, but a newer handling of the Christmas story is represented by two accounts of the shepherds abiding in the field.² In both lyrics the treatment is pastoral and realistic ; the shepherds’ duties and occupations are described at the moment when the angels appear.

One combination of Latin and English words gives a hint as to the origin of the inverted echo-songs of the printed miscellanies. In this example, the Latin words begin each line and are necessary to the meter and to the sense ; but, read by themselves, they form a kind of acrostic sentence : —

“ *Salve* with abeysance to God in humblesse
Regina to regne ever more in blysse,
Mater to Cryst as we believe expresse,
Misericordie unto all wretchesse,” etc.³

The majority of the religious songs are Christmas carols. They are apparently intended to be sung. At all events they have such external marks of lyric poetry as refrains, short lines, graceful stanzas. The best known carol in the manuscript is probably the *Song of the Rose* : —

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

² *Ibid.*, p. 237.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

“Of a rose, a lovely rose,
And of a rose I sing a song !
Herkyn to me both olde and yonge,
How a rose began to sprynge,
A fayerer rose to my lykyng
Sprong ther never in Kynges lande.”¹

There are two hunting-songs, very nearly alike, both describing the killing of the stag.² The atmosphere of the sport, such as was noticed in the Henry VIII manuscript, is here lacking. Rather more realistic is the drinking-song, one of the earliest examples in the miscellanies : —

“Jentyll butler, bellamy,
ffyl ye boll by ye eye !
Yat we may drynk by and by
with ; how butler how
Bevis a towt
ffill ye boll butler and let ye cup rowght !”³

One final quotation illustrates an early song of Christmas customs — a kind of lyric that persists throughout the Elizabethan period, even to Herrick’s time : —

“Lett no man cum in to this hall,
Grome, page, nor yet marshall,
But yat sum sport he bryng with all !
for now ys the tyme of Crystmas !

Yff that he say, he can not syng
Sum oder sport then lett hym bryng !
Yat yt may please at thys festyng !
for now ys the tyme of Crystmas !

¹ *Anglia*, p. 232.

² *Ibid.*, p. 194.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 282.

Yff he say he can nowht do,
Then for my love aske hym no mo !
But to the stokkes then lett hym go !
for now ys the tyme of Crystmas !''¹

II

THE greatest of the printed miscellanies is Tottel's, published in 1557.² Besides the poems of Wyatt and Surrey, which give the book its importance, it contains lyrics by Grimald, Lord Vaux, and others. Though from the courtesy due to his rank, Surrey's name is on the title-page and his poems come first, the important contributor, from the standpoint of lyric poetry, was Sir Thomas Wyatt. The selections from Surrey are better poetry, perhaps, but not nearly so lyrical.

The pervading theme of Wyatt's songs, as of the entire miscellany, is love. In the treatment of this motive, under Petrarchan influence, he shows a refinement upon the methods of the conventional love-plaint, thereby becoming the earliest singer of the Elizabethan subjective lyric. When the old lyric situations reappear, the expression is more imaginative, more individual in detail, and more psychological in its picture of the lover's state of mind, as in the song of the deserted lover.³ In this following example, the recurrence of the memory

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

² *Songes and Sonettes, written by the ryght honorable Lorde Henry Haward late Earle of Surrey, and other.* Apud Richardum Tottel, 1557. Arber's Reprint, 1897.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

to a vivid picture of former bliss, gives more point to the lover's grief than any number of exclamations:—

“Thanked be fortune, it hath bene otherwise
Twenty times better : but once especiall,
In thinne array, after a pleasant gyse,
When her loose gowne did from her shoulders fall,
And she me caught in her arms long and small,
And therewithall, so swetely did me kysse,
And softly sayd ; deare heart, how like you this ?”

With such a number of love-lyrics grouped together, as here in the case of Wyatt's poems, it is inevitable that the reader should feel to some extent a common personality in them all; or at least, the lover becomes typical. This is only a small step towards the sonnet-series, with their more or less individual heroes, but it is a sure one. The tendency appears elsewhere in the handling of dramatic motives, themes arising from situations clearly not in the poet's experience, but treated experimentally.¹ This impersonal interest in love, and the expression of it for its own sake, shows itself also in the elaborate similes of such pieces as the *Lover compareth his state to a shippe in perilous storme tossed on the sea*,² or the *Comparison of love to a streame falling from the Alpes*;³ the image in such cases being studied merely as an artistic means of expression. An entirely new note is sounded in the *Description of such a one as*

¹ See *The lover excuseth himself, Songes and Sonettes*, p. 66.

² *Ibid.*, p. 39.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

he would love;¹ not before in the English lyric had a poet contemplated the great passion so objectively as to theorize in advance about his mistress.

But the development of the subjective lyric, as it appears in the later sonnet-series, called for more dramatic minds than Wyatt's. Though well in line with the new mode of thought, as has been indicated, he was naturally a lyrist, a maker of songs. This native gift combined happily with his foreign culture to produce his most typical work, the art-lyrics—songs meant to be enjoyed without music, as opposed to the practical song. Externally these poems follow the old French tradition as seen in the songs of Edward I's reign; they are built on light-moving stanzas, simpler of course than the Middle English riming-schemes, and they make effective use of refrains. In the treatment of their subjects, however, they are analytical, philosophical, and generally too closely thought out, to be good songs.² Some of the shorter pieces in this class, while losing nothing of their lyric quality, tend to become epigrammatic. This tendency later becomes largely characteristic of the Elizabethan song, and may be explained then, as here now in Wyatt, by the presence of an intellectual element, demanding concise expression.

Several of Wyatt's poems recall themes already

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

² See *The Lover taught, mistrusteth allurements, ibid.*, p. 42.

familiar, but with a typical change of treatment. The dialogue between two lovers¹ is nothing more than the old formula of the *débat*, but its lineage is concealed by presenting the characters, not as shepherd and shepherdess, but as courtier and lady. The subject, too, is almost concealed by a double refinement of thought and phrase; what was originally nothing more delicate than the plain-spoken importunities of the rustic to his mistress, is here made into a series of pretty compliments and retorts, with the emotional pitch of polite conversation.

Wyatt's one reference to his country is short, but fine in feeling, in the lines on his return from Spain.² The poem has a threefold interest: as a personal lyric, as an expression of patriotism, and as a note of Elizabethan experience. The enthusiasm of the poet's home-coming is unmistakably felt, and gives a charm to the verses they might not otherwise have had. The reference to the king and the country, in the same phrase, betrays a higher type of courtier than has appeared in earlier verses of this kind; there is here no attempt to flatter the sovereign by exalting him above his realm, but loyalty to the throne is accepted as a result of love of country.

Wyatt's influence on the lyric is of two kinds. As a subjective lyrist, he brought into England the Petrarchan sonnet, and, in its final form, the Petrar-

¹ *Songes and Sonettes*, p. 79.

² *Ibid.*, p. 84.

chan subject-matter; Chaucer had used the latter for lyric purposes, but he was untouched by its introspective mood. Wyatt's handling of it was intellectual and wise rather than spontaneous; when it appears in his sonnets, it has forceful expression but lacks the quality of song. In the lighter verse-forms, more in accord with the French genius, he achieves many successful examples of the art-lyric, the song not meant for music; here, while dealing with subjects as subtle as those of his sonnets, he preserves the song-quality in the words. In this success he anticipates the highly wrought lyrics of Sidney.

—Surrey is generally reckoned the follower of Wyatt in his art, as he is in time, but he had only one side of his master's gifts; he was a lyrist only in the sense of being a poet of subjective expression, and he lacked almost entirely the song-quality of words. Of the relation of real music to speech, or of their combination in practical song, he is, like Wyatt, quite unconscious. His conception of lyric character is dramatic rather than personal; even when he has most the manner of self-revelation, like the Elizabethan sonnet-eers, he is likely to disclose an imagined experience not his own. The numerous poems called "descriptions," such as the *Description of the restless state of a lover*,¹ represent this kind of dramatic revelation. In such a lyric Surrey is sure to im-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

agine a particular personality to fit each situation, so that though the lover, as in Wyatt, is typical throughout the series, the type, nevertheless, constantly varies. These facts of Surrey's method are important as tending to discredit the genuineness of the love-stories in most of the sonnet-series, beginning with Surrey himself and the Geraldine myth.¹

His sonnets, as a whole, have greater lyric effect, more song-quality than Wyatt's, but the reason is largely external. Instead of the Petrarchan stanza, he used, in the main, the quatrain combination later made famous by Shakspeare. At other times he used systems of fourteen lines, hardly to be called sonnets. The lightness of these forms, joined with the fact that Surrey had probably a much finer feeling for English verse than Wyatt, will explain a lyric superiority that seems at first sight greater than it really is. The sonnets divide themselves, by the external effect, into three kinds — dramatic, lyrical, and biographic. Of the lyrical quality in Surrey's sonnets enough has been said, and it should be remembered that the criticism is not considered absolute, but is meant to show the effect of a comparison with Wyatt. The dramatic sonnets belong to that class of imaginative lyrics already described, wherein the poet speaks in a supposed character or situation.

¹ For the Geraldine story, see Henry Morley's *English Writers*, viii. p. 27.

A good example is the *Complaint that his ladie, after she knew of his love kept her face alway hidden from him*.¹ It is apparent in these verses that Surrey has attained at once that appearance of sincerity in an improbable situation, which is the model of the sonnet-makers. The most interesting sonnets, however, are those which adopt the autobiographical manner, as the lines to Geraldine.² With these may be classed the autobiographical lyrics, not sonnets, such as the poem on Windsor.³ It is not too much to say that this class of lyrics accounts for Surrey's immediate fame and the preference for his work over Wyatt's; for there is more of a direct personality in them, whether the facts of experience are true or imagined, than in any lyric before Sidney, and the themes and details of each piece are more native to England, more real in appearance, than any of Wyatt's.

Surrey repeats the familiar variations of the love-plaint, but refines them, as Wyatt had done. Some of his new motives are interesting, as when he brings back the conception of the god of love as a concrete personality,⁴ which had practically been absent from the lyric since Chaucer. The ideals of chivalric love appear in refined and even exaggerated form, as when he swears eternal, though unrequited, service to his lady,⁵ or professes to find comfort enough in the contemplation of the lady's

¹ *Songes and Sonettes*, p. 12. ² *Ibid.*, p. 13. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

worth, without any nearer enjoyment of her beauty.¹ Some of the lyric situations reflect the new fashion of travel among English gentlemen, as in the two laments of ladies for the absence of their lovers over seas.²

Surrey's nearest approach to the practical song is the art-lyric, where, in the few examples he attempts, he falls below Wyatt. He seems to have no sense for the externals of lyric effect, never even attempting the refrain, which Wyatt had constantly employed to advantage. The subject-matter of these art-songs, like Wyatt's, is subtle and finely wrought; the words demand close attention in order to be understood.

The number of gnomic or moral poems in Surrey is rather large. The old proverbial manner of such themes, however, he changed to the tone of philosophy, and he gives out his wisdom as the result of personal reflection. A typical subject is the *Mean and sure estate*,³ which he treats more than once, perhaps because Wyatt had made several versions of it. The popularity of the theme is shown by its constant appearance in the anonymous verses, of later date, included in the miscellany.

An interesting corner of Surrey's work is made up of literary tributes, like the verses addressed to Martial,⁴ and those on Wyatt's death.⁵ The reference to other authors is old in English literature,

¹ *Songes and Sonettes*, p. 14. ² *Ibid.*, p. 27. ³ *Ibid.*, pp. 28, 29.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 19.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

but rare in the lyric, and here the manner is new; it is the first evidence of the intimate literary life that the Elizabethan poets were to lead. With those poets Surrey's genius was in full accord; he gave the weight of his art to that side of Wyatt's writing that was most subjective and introspective, and, in the musical sense of the word, least lyrical. Thus he is nearer to the sonnet-series than to the song-books, and, standing between Wyatt and the later makers of art-lyrics, he serves to obscure that side of the older poet's genius.

Grimald is a much less ambitious figure than these two lyrists, but his pieces in *Tottel's Miscellany* have their own interest. He stands for the type of minor poet, who, though hidden by the larger names, is present throughout the period, and emerges fully developed in Marvell. The love-poem in his art takes the form of complimentary addresses to ladies of his acquaintance, whom he signifies by their initials, as, *To Maistress D. A.*,¹ or *A Newe Yeres gift, to the L. M. S.*² Sentiment takes the place of passion in these verses, except in some unfortunate examples where even sentiment is omitted. A number of poems called *Epitaphs* show the same weakness of inspiration; with the exception of the notable lines to his mother,³ they are but perfunctory moralizings. The gnomic tone of these funeral pieces is seen to more advantage in such poems as *Mirth*,⁴ in which the lighter subject

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 104. ² *Ibid.*, p. 105. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 115. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

makes the unpretentious manner acceptable; and it takes on a new form in the *Description of Vertue*,¹ in which the gnomic ideas are advanced through a dialogue, by short questions and answers. Since the method becomes a favorite with the later poets, it may be well to quote this example:—

“What one art thou, thus in torn weed yclad?
Vertue, in price whom auncient sages had.
Why, poorely rayd? For fadying goodes past care.
Why doublefaced? I marke eche fortunes fare.
This bridle, what? Mindes rages to restrain.
Tooles why beare you: I love to take great pain.
Why, wings? I reach above the starres to flye,
Why tread you death? I onely cannot dye.”

Grimald seems to be in the line of the minor poets like Marvell, by virtue of a few verses that show a thoughtful, gentle personality through the far from lofty expression. This example, together with the lines to his mother, and those called the *Garden*,² illustrate the point.

The anonymous lyrics in *Tottel's Miscellany* are easily classed under the types already considered. Most of them are love-plaints, in the familiar manner, or moral observations akin to the gnomic poem. Perhaps the most noteworthy selection is that in which *The lover telleth of his divers joyes and adversities in love and lastly of his ladies death*³—a lyrical ballad like the *Ancient Mariner*, built up of lyric units and welded together by a single spirit. The swiftness and sureness of these verses raise them far

¹ *Songes and Sonettes*, p. 108. ² *Ibid.*, p. 111. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

above their companion pieces. The popularity of Chaucer's lyrics, as well as of his narrative poems, is shown by the inclusion of one of his ballades, *Flee from the prese and dwell with sothfastnes*.¹ The religious lyric is represented by one penitential hymn,² and the satiric poem against women survives in two very ungallant but vigorous songs. The new literary culture finds natural expression in a sonnet, full of true feeling, in "praise of Petrarke, and of Laura his ladie";³ and lastly, two lyrics, on the model of the holly song in the Henry VIII manuscript, continue the tradition of this simple love-song, expressed in images of English flowers.⁴

The second miscellany, the *Paradise of Dainty Devices*, 1576,⁵ shows at once a falling off in lyric composition and a decline in taste. The lyrics in this collection are of little positive merit, but serve as an index of the popular themes. The majority of these themes are moral or gnomic—the shortness of life, the vanity of human joy, the sin and folly of youth, the fickleness of fortune, the value of faithful and the danger of treacherous friends. The "preaching" tone never flags, and evidently is becoming monotonous to the poets themselves, for in two cases it is enlivened by an ingenious trick-stanza. This is a kind of inverted echo-song, like that in the fifth manuscript miscellany; instead of the last words of each line form-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

² *Ibid.*, p. 178.

⁵ Collier's Reprint.

² *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 187, 199.

ing a sentence by themselves, the first words are used for that purpose, as:—

“*Beholde the blast which blows the blossomes from the tree,
The end whereof, consumes and comes to nought we see;
Ere thou therefore, be blown from life that may not last,
Begin for grace to call, for time mispent and past.*”

In the remaining three stanzas, the first words of each line complete this embedded moral:—

“*Have mind, on death, and fear, to sin,
For death, shall reape, that lyfe, hath sowed,
And lyfe, shall spring, where death, hath mowen.*”¹

The religious lyric is represented by a few penitential poems, but chiefly by three hymns for Christmas-day, Easter, and Whitsunday.² They differ from previous examples in that they express the sentiment not of an individual, nor of Christians as a whole, but of the Church. Not only in the names of the feast-days, but more especially in the orderly quality of the emotion, the sense of ritual, they express a religious feeling derived indirectly through an ecclesiastical system. In this respect they might compare with the early religious songs much as Herbert's do with Milton's ode on the nativity.

The love-plaint has rather few examples. One poem, however, should be mentioned for employing the method of question and answer, as in Grimald's description of Virtue:—

“I sigh, why so? for sorrow of her smart.
I morne, wherfore? for grief that she complains,” etc.³

¹ Collier's Reprint, p. 2.

² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

In this class of lyric, though not of the same poetic mood, is a *débat* between a lover and his lady. The interest of this poem has shifted from the subject, the wooing, to the ingenious rime-scheme which the dialogue takes. How far afield the poet goes for his technical devices, can be shown only by a quotation:—

- "A. Shall I no way win you, to grant my desire?
B. What woman will grant you the thing you require?
A. You only to love me is all that I crave.
B. You only to leave me is all I would have.
A. My dear, alas, now say not so,
B. To love you best, I must say no:
A. Yet will I not flitt.
B. Then play on the bitt.
A. I will.
B. Do still.
A. Yet kill not—
B. I will not.
A. Make me your man,
B. Beshrewe me than," etc.¹

Among the other single poems that call for mention, there is a May-song, containing the conventional praise of that poets' month, and also a lyric in praise of music, the first treatment of that theme in the miscellanies. The song on the refrain "The falling out of faithful friends renewing is of love,"² is on the whole the type of lyric that this

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

² This is the work of Richard Edwards (1523?-1566), a popular musician and poet. He was educated at Oxford, and studied music under George Etheridge. In 1561 he was appointed Master of the Children of the Chapel. He wrote two plays:

collection stands for; the ideas are shaped into proverbs and are not very new; there is a certain amount of literary form without any literary inspiration, and the whole has an effective "swing," which may be called lyrical in one sense, but which has no connection with music or real song.

— This miscellany introduces the work of one or two minor poets, whose names are remembered, though their poems here printed are forgotten. Probably the best of these, very famous as a poet in his own day, but memorable now as the friend of Sidney, is Sir Edward Dyer. The poem with which his name is most easily associated, "My mind to me a kingdom is," was later set to music in the song-books. Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, should also be mentioned here, though his work requires little more than mention. His mood and manner are exhibited in the lines, "The trickling tears that falles along my cheekes."¹ As in Dyer's case, his best lyric, "If women could be fayre and yet not fonde," appeared with a musical setting in the song-books.²

The third miscellany, *A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions*,³ 1578, is of the same general

Palamon and Arcite, 1566, which is lost, and *Damon and Pithias*, 1571, which is printed in Dodsley's *Old Plays*.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

² The remains of both these poets, as well as those of Robert, Earl of Essex, and Walter, Earl of Essex, are reprinted in the *Fuller Worthies Library*, iv.

³ Collier's Reprint.

rank as the preceding collection. The love-plaints are represented in their full variety of theme and monotony of rhythm; the "poulter's measure," alternate alexandrines and septenaries, serves for them all. A number of them, however, acquire a certain distinction from being cast in the form of epistles from one lover to the other; perhaps the popularity of Ovid's epistle from Penelope to Ulysses, attested by many paraphrases in Tottel's and elsewhere, may account for this form. One of these letters, in particular, *A letter written by a yonge gentilwoman and sent to her husband unawares (by a friend) into Italy*,¹ is another glimpse in lyric poetry of the new fashion of travel.

The great length of the titles in all these examples may be perhaps laid at the door of Euphuism. Another explanation would be that most of the popular lyric poetry at this time has a narrative background; in many cases the poet tells how, under certain circumstances, he heard some one sing such and such songs. When, in process of literary evolution, the species become distinct, the function of the narrative, in these popular lyrics, is assumed by the title, which becomes a necessary introduction to the song proper. In some cases the lyric situation described by the title becomes the stimulus of the lyric emotion, so that the unity of the poem begins with the title, as: *The lamentable lover, abiding in the bitter bale of direful doubts*

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

towards his ladies loyalty, writeth unto her as followeth.¹

Among the familiar themes in the collection are two lyrics to women, who are designated, after Grimald's example in *Tottel's Miscellany*,² by their initials. It is interesting to reflect whether this convention, like the disguise of the sonnet-series, is practised in England through courtesy to the ladies, or whether it is a survival from the earliest Provençal love-song, which, being largely devoted to illicit love, took the disguise as a safeguard.³

These lyrics in this collection are evidently intended to be sung, since the name of the tune is given to which each may be set.⁴ The growing popularity of music, as evidenced in lyric poetry by the verses in praise of it, and by the manuscript song-miscellanies, here makes its impression upon the literary collections. But it should be remembered that these are popular ballads and popular airs, not the art-lyrics of the madrigal books, nor the polyphonic music to which they were set.

The fourth miscellany, *A Handful of Pleasant Delights*, 1584,⁵ is as destitute of literary art as the manuscript collections of Henry VIII. The sole

¹ Collier's Reprint, p. 9.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 71, 79.

³ "To this fear of the loved one is added the fear of detection by others. The lady is always addressed by an assumed name (Bels Vezers, Tort n'Avetz, etc.). There is a continual abuse of tale-bearers (lausengiers) and a strong desire for secrecy." L. F. Mott, *System of Courtly Love*, 1896, p. 12.

⁴ Collier's Reprint, p. 49.

⁵ Reprinted by Arber.

claim to literary interest is that its first song, *A Nosegay*,¹ is supposed to have furnished the model for Ophelia's posy. But the intention of the publisher, far from imitating *Tottel's Miscellany*, was, as he says in his versified preface, to supply a handy volume of favorite ballads for those who like singing,—to make a song-book, in short; and, as Mr. Arber remarks, had it appeared twelve years later, it would have had the music as well as the words.² As it is, the tune is named to which each song is expected to be sung.

This miscellany, then, falls between the two popular forms of lyric publishing; it is not a literary collection, nor has it entirely the practical equipment of the later song-books. Among the traits, however, that show its kinship to the earlier collections, are the subject-matter and the length of the songs. These are not the "swallow-flights of song," of the madrigal books, but might rather be classed with the lengthy street-ballads of Elizabeth's time. Yet, on the other hand, they show their practical song-nature in their construction, always simple, and in their language, which never usurps the melody of the music. There is little art in the words, and less in the music for which the verses were intended; they are but simple, popular melodies, repeated interminably as long as the stanzas last.

Such length of words and comparative shortness

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

² *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. xi.

of tune, in songs of this sort, results always in discrediting both arts. There can be little emotional sympathy between words and music, when the same melodic phrases are made to cover the varying sentiments of the different stanzas; and the effective turns of the words are smoothed over and made unnoticeable by the monotonous tune. The effect of such a combination is to give rise to what we usually call "popular songs," though it is clear that folk-songs and national lyrics are not meant. This miscellany is the exact type of such "popular" creations. The audience to whom the publisher appealed evidently had no appreciation of the art-lyric, as practised by Wyatt, nor were they musicians, except in so far as they may have had the ability to remember a tune.

Most of the themes are old. There are numerous love-plaints, in which the lover chides the hard-hearted lady for being too difficult to win. In one case a certain effect is got by making the woman the suitor,¹ but the song is really the same; in none of the lyrics of this period in which a woman speaks is there much expression of a feminine point of view; it is simply a man's emotions under another name.

The satiric song against women appears slightly disguised in a *Warning for Lovers*,² in which the poet expresses clearly his opinion of the sex. The religious song also has but one example in the

¹ Arber Reprint, p. 43.

² *Ibid.*, p. 37.

collection, and in that, too, the theme is somewhat new. The *Joy of Virginity*¹ expresses the religious and monastic doctrines as to that state; from this time on it is a favorite theme in the miscellanies. Among the purely moral songs, a new theme comes in with the song *At Cambridge Castle*.² The supposed poet, imprisoned for crime, tells others to profit by his example, and live more righteously. This theme constantly reappears in the street-ballads of Elizabethan criminals.

The fifth miscellany, the *Phoenix Nest*,³ 1593, shows a much higher level of art, and is closer to contemporary literature than the preceding collections. The first three pieces are elegies on Sir Philip Sidney, written in a somewhat loftier mood than anything of the kind in the earlier books. The second elegy, especially (in the riming system that Tennyson adopted for *In Memoriam*), has a rugged directness quite new to the conventional "epitaph," as in the stanza:—

"England doth hold thy limns that bred the same,
Flanders thy valure where it last was tried,
The camp thy sorrow where thy body died,
Thy friends, thy want; the world, thy vertues fame."⁴

This elegy, which was reprinted two years later with Spenser's *Astrophel*, is attributed to Sir Walter Raleigh. Five of his pieces are preserved anonymously in this miscellany. Though the elegy is

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

² *Ibid.*, p. 57.

³ Collier's Reprint.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

probably the best, each of the others is interesting on its own account. The most unusual is the *Farewell to the Court*,¹ which attracts not only by its autobiographic qualities, but by its technic; it is an English sonnet, with the last line of each quatrain used as a refrain.

The praise of chastity, introduced as a lyric theme in the preceding miscellany, here has two examples. In one, the argument is based upon religious and moral observation, as in the first occurrence of the theme;² in the other the poet pleads the beauty of maidenhood, evidently taking as his model for theme and treatment the verses from *Orlando Furioso*, i. 41, "La verginella è simile alla rosa," etc.³

The chief importance of the volume, however, lies in the number of art-lyrics it contains. The larger part of the poems are songs of considerable merit, made on a variety of stanzas, but all conforming to the limits and requirements of the lyric. The long narrative ballads of the preceding volume are set aside for the short, swift expression of purely lyrical emotion. For the first time in miscellany literature, complicated forms are used without disturbing the lightness of the song, as in the lyric by Thomas Lodge, beginning:—

¹ Collier's Reprint, p. 70. Raleigh's literary remains are edited by J. Hannah, the *Aldine* poets, 1870; reissued 1891.

² Collier's Reprint, p. 23.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

“My bonie Lass, thine eye
So slie,
Hath made me sorrowe so ;
Thy Crimsen cheekes my deare
So cleere,
Have so much wrought my woe,”¹ etc.

It is easy to recognize the theme of the love-plaint in this opening stanza, but the manner is quite new; the song-quality, lightness of word and imagery, has become more important than the subject-matter. This is the first example in the miscellanies of this Elizabethan trait—a joyous treatment of ostensibly unhappy themes, often practised by Shakspeare, as in “Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more!” The trait defies analysis, and later becomes familiar in the Cavalier lyrics.

Several love-songs in praise of women have a peculiar structure, which from this time is met with everywhere in the lyric. They recount the charms of the lady by enumerating the details of her beauty,—hair, brow, cheeks, lips, etc., from head to foot. There is nothing new in the method; Watson said he got it from Æneas Silvius and Ariosto;² the important thing about it is that all the details of the picture immediately became conventionalized with the English poets, and it is the ideal of beauty for the whole period, except when

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

² Thomas Watson, *Poems*, Arber Reprint, 1895, p. 43.

an occasional bold singer like Shakspeare cries down the tyranny of the fashion.¹

The same convention is reflected in one of the numerous sonnets in the book, in which the poet, by a purely rhetorical device, rings the changes of his art on the details of his lady's beauty. The device becomes so common with the Elizabethans, that an example in full will not be out of place : —

“Those eies which set my fancie on a fire,
Those crisped haire, which hold my hart in chains,
Those daintie hands, which conquered my desire,
That wit, which of my thoughts doth hold the rains,
Those eies for cleereness do the stars surpas,
Those haire obscure the brightness of the sunne,
Those hands more white than ever Ivorie was,
That wit even to the skies hath glorie won.
O eies that pearse our harts without remorse,
O haire of right that weare a roiall crowne,
O hands that conquer more than Cæsars force,
O wit that turns huge kingdoms upside down.
Then love be judge, what hart can thee withstand :
Such eies, such haire, such wit, and such a hand.”²

The sixth miscellany, *England's Helicon*, 1600,³ brings us at once into the company of the great lyrists. The names of Sidney, Spenser, Breton, Lodge, Peele, Barnfield, and others are signed to their poems. But it is only to the first pastoral period of the Elizabethan lyric that the collection introduces us, and of this period Sidney is most expressive. Not only does he lead the poets in

¹ Sonnet, No. 130.

² Collier's Reprint, p. 89.

³ Collier's Reprint.

personal fame, but in his work, especially in the *Arcadia*, he gave them a conventional life upon which to draw for the facts of their lyric experience.

In the hands of the pastoral school the old lyric themes take a slightly different appearance. For example, the typical lover of the early miscellanies becomes a shepherd, and his lady a shepherdess; his emotions are translated no longer into classical images, but into conventional scenes of the hill-side.¹ The old praise of the mean estate becomes a praise of the shepherd's life, as distinguished from the city or the court.² To some lyric-forms, such as the *débat*,³ and the *pastourelle*,⁴ the proper setting is restored by the country background and the open air; and the pastoral convention appears curiously in *The Shepherd's Song; a Caroll or Hymne for Christmas*.⁵ The shepherd's piping is compared with the angel's song; the stars are described as flocks pent "within an azure fold"; and the angel tells the shepherds that Christ is born, "the Worlds great Sheepheard."

With the pastoral tradition come a number of dialogue lyrics, probably suggested by the dialogues in Virgil and Theocritus. These poems divide easily into two classes—those in which the dialogue is framed of questions and answers, as in Virgil's first Eclogue, and those in which the singers share the song by turns, either to compare

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

² *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

their skill, or for the simple effect of refrain. A good example of the first kind of dialogue is Peele's "Melampus, when will love be void of fears,"¹ in which the trials of love are brought out by a series of questions and answers. Of the second type, the contention in verse, the best illustration is the song in which *Faustus and Firmius sing to their Nymph by Turns*.² The simple effect of a refrain is seen in the form of song called the roundelay, in which one singer advances the lyric by alternate lines, while in between the other makes impromptu variations of theme and phrases, as in *Perigot and Cuddies Roundelay*:³—

- P. "It fell upon a holy-Eve,
 C. Hey hoe holy-day;
 P. When holy-Fathers wont to shrive,
 C. Now ginneth this Roundelay.
 P. Sitting upon a hill so hie,
 C. Hey hoe the hie hill,
 P. The while my flocke did feede thereby,
 C. The while the Shepheardes selfe did spill."

The fashion of complimenting the queen in extravagant poems was well developed when this book was published, and was colored by the pastoral tradition, the queen becoming a sylvan deity, to be worshipped in images of nature.

A hint of another great lyric period is given in the half-dozen songs reprinted from the first song-books.⁴ They remind us that the end of the mis-

¹ Collier's Reprint, p. 40.

² *Ibid.*, p. 147.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

cellany period is at hand, yet at the same time they show that the new songs are art-lyrics, to be enjoyed without the music.

One altogether new lyric theme is the epithalamium, *Arfileus his caroll, for ioy of the new marriage, between Syrenus and Diana*.¹ It follows the model of Spenser's wedding-song, with the same pastoral setting and use of a refrain, "Ring forth fair Nymphs your joyfull Songs for gladness;" but the emotional intensity of Spenser's poem declines here into a tone of sincere compliment, which persists in the similar writings of Jonson and Herrick.

The last of the miscellanies is Davison's *Poetical Rhapsody*, 1602.² By this time the publication of poetry was so general that the editors of collections could not expect to find manuscript pieces of any merit, and in consequence the miscellany became a mere reprint of successful lyrics. From this it easily declined into a collection of poetical quotations like *England's Parnassus*, 1600, and *Belvedere, or the Garden of the Muses*, of the same year.

Davison's miscellany begins, like its predecessor, with poems of Sir Philip Sidney. These two lyrics,³ devoted to his friendship with Sir Edward Dyer and Fulke Greville, strike a true note in the midst of verse not remarkable for literal sincerity. A large part of the book is given up to sonnets, some of which are taken in groups from earlier publica-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

² Collier's Reprint.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

tions, as the ten sonnets¹ from Watson's *Passionate Centurie of Love*, 1582. A number of lyrics are called madrigals, in the inaccurate fashion of the Elizabethan poets; they have but few marks of the strict madrigal. They all, however, like the English examples of the madrigal, have a strong epigrammatic turn — a quality which is in evidence throughout the miscellany.

The praise of the mean estate, lately transposed into a praise of country life, now becomes a praise of vagabondage, in a *Song in Praise of a Beggar's Life*.² But the true note of vagabondage is not yet struck; the poet has no experience of the life he sings, and his song, in spite of its intention and its disguise, is still the praise of a quiet life. The song against women is almost at its last gasp in the so-called *Invective*.³ The tradition of chivalry after Spenser and Sidney is too strong for the old theme, and the poet qualifies his criticism so as quite to take off the edge.

Three epitaphs upon the death of a "rare child of six years old," are epitaphs in the modern sense, not long moralizings as in the first miscellanies. The child-motive in poetry seems always to add grace to the poet; certainly these three epigrams show more than usual feeling.

It will be seen from this study that certain of the old lyric themes are constant throughout the miscellanies. The smallness of their number will

¹ Collier's Reprint, p. 98. ² *Ibid.*, p. 161. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

be paralleled by the small number of lyrical themes in the sonnets; it might be paralleled from all lyric poetry. Gozzi's contention, recorded by Goethe,¹ that the number of possible situations in tragedy was thirty-six, suggests that the number of possible themes in the lyric may not be much larger. The development and modification of the few themes of this period has been noted. The most significant change, however, is in the miscellanies themselves. With Tottel's, they came into fashion as a convenient method of placing modest poets before the public; with Davison's, they reached their ultimate decline as mere collections of already popular poems.

¹ "Gozzi asserted that there could be but thirty-six tragic situations. Schiller tried hard to find more, but he could not find even as many as Gozzi."—*Conversations with Eckermann*. For the situations in detail, cf. *Les 36 Situations Dramatiques*, par Georges Polti, Paris, 1895.

CHAPTER IV

OTHER LYRISTS OF THE MISCELLANY PERIOD

MOST of Surrey's and Wyatt's poems were included in *Tottel's Miscellany*, and the few then omitted were afterward recovered from manuscripts, and published in the complete editions of the new poets.¹ They come easily under the classifications of the lyrics in the *Miscellany*, having, with one exception, no distinction from them in matter or form. The exception is the series of rondeaus made by Wyatt,² which show still more clearly his gift for the art-lyric and his ease in lyric forms.

The first lyrics to be published after *Tottel's Miscellany* were Barnaby Googe's *Eglogs, Epytaphes, and Sonettes*, 1563.³ The unwillingness of the poets to come into print, which furnished excuse for Tottel's venture, is recalled in the history of this volume. Googe went to Spain in 1561, leaving his manuscript for safety with a friend, Blundeston, who, finding the verses good, sent them to a publisher. When Googe returned, the work was

¹ *The Works of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, and Sir T. Wyatt*, G. F. Nott, 2 vols., London, 1815-16.

² *Ibid.*, ii. p. 18.

³ Arber's Reprint.

already set up, to the amazement of the author, and shortly afterward it appeared.¹

Of the eight eclogues only the second² is entirely lyrical. This is a complaint of rejected love, put in the mouth of a shepherd, with the conventional imagery of the pastoral. The lyric effect is helped by the recurrence of one line, at regular intervals, like a refrain: —

“Thou seest her mind ; why fearest thou than,
Dametas, for to dye ?”

In this volume all septenaries are divided, as in the quotation, after the fourth accent, and alexandrines after the third. This peculiarity is explained on the score of economy ; the printer, it is supposed, wished to get the verses in fairly large type on a small page. But the extreme is reached in pentapody verses, all of which are divided after the second accent, as in the lines to Alexander Neville:³—

“The Muses joye,
and well they may to se,
So well theyr labour
boure com to good sucesse” etc.

Of the four epitaphs, the one on Thomas Phaer⁴ and that on Nicholas Grimald⁵ are remembered for their literary associations, but they have no lyrical quality. The one on *M. Shelley slayne at Musselbrough*⁶ is better. It is rather the celebra-

¹ *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. 8.

² *Ibid.*, p. 75.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

tion of a heroic deed, like the *Charge of the Light Brigade*, than a funeral song; indeed, except for its inferior subject, it belongs with the battle-songs. Shelley, according to Googe, when the English, outnumbered by the Scotch, hesitated in the charge, threw himself before the enemy, losing his life to inspire his comrades. The national prejudice against the Scotch and the ardor of battle are expressed almost in Minot's vigorous manner.

The term "sonettes," applied to the rest of the poems, is a loose term for lyrics. There are no sonnets in the book. The first thirteen of these lyrics are really epistles, moral and complimentary, addressed to the poet's friends, and not lyrics by any test of external form. They all, however, reveal Googe's personality intimately. He has the tone of familiarity with the reader often seen in minor poets, and not to be confounded with the revelation of personality which comes from exalted lyric inspiration.

The love-songs, such as "Once musing as I sat,"¹ show Googe at his best. Here, as in the song on Shelley, the lyric motive is clearly enunciated in the beginning, and quickly developed, with no superfluity of thought or word. The same qualities are in the short lyric *To Mistress D.*² It celebrates Mary Darrell, the lady who, after a stormy romance, became the poet's bride.³

¹ Arber's Reprint, p. 93.

² *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. 8 sq.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

The lines on *Goyng towardes Spayne*,¹ in which Googe bids farewell to England, confessing at the same time the love of travel that takes him forth, and the verses on *Commynge home warde out of Spayne*,² in which he prays for safe voyage to his native shore, both recall Wyatt's poems on a similar return, which perhaps here served as a model. There is the same note of affection for England in all these poems, and in all alike the lyric motive springs naturally from the new presence of travel in the poets' lives.

The next publication, Turberville's *Epitaphs, Epigrams, Songs and Sonets*,³ even when compared with Googe's modest performances, is an inferior collection; Turberville betrays at once his poverty of ideas, both by seeking lyric motives in sentimental and fantastic situations, as in the lines *To his Ladie, that by hap when he kissed her and made hir lippe bleede, controlde him and tooke disdain*,⁴ and by making a complicated and ingenious stanza the chief excuse for a lyric, as in the verses, *The Lover obtayning his Wishe*, etc.⁵ This poet evidently caught the glamour of poesie, but none of the spark, from Surrey and Googe, both of whom he mentions. He carries on their themes without distinction, even imitating the latter's verses to real women by addressing a supposed

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

² *Ibid.*, p. 102.

³ In Chalmers's *English Poets*, ii. p. 583 sq., and in Collier's Reprint, 1895.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 588.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 590.

mistress of his own, whom he designates by the initial "P."¹ His most original note is a certain hard treatment of physical deformity, a quality which reappears in Herrick's verse. It is illustrated in Turberville by the verses on *An aged Gentlewoman*,² or by the epigram *On one that had a great nose*.³

Turberville shows in his shorter lyrics a large amount of classical suggestion. In several cases he translates directly, as in the version of the epigram ascribed to Plato, 'Αστέρας εἰσαθρεῖς ἀστέρι ἐμός.⁴ But this smattering of classical motives found no reaction in his imagination, and left his verse as arid as before.

In 1572, two years after Turberville's volume, appeared Gascoigne's *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowers*. This was a miscellaneous collection of his poems, lyrical only in part, and it was included in the enlarged edition of his works in 1575, called the *Posies of George Gascoigne Esquire*.⁵ The poet arranges his works, under this general title, in three classes, designated as "Flowers," "Hearbes," and "Weedes," by which terms he meant to indicate differences in poetic charm. It is hard, now, however, to see much difference in the poems of these classes. Gascoigne's importance is due to his

¹ *English Poets*, p. 648.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 623.

² *Ibid.*, p. 603.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 635.

⁵ *Complete Poems of George Gascoigne*, William Carew Hazlitt, The Roxburghe Library, 2 vols., 1869.

versatility in other forms of literature, rather than to any unusual skill as a lyricist. He should be ranked with Googe and Turberville as an exponent of the type of song found in the less important miscellanies. He profits by the new learning from Italy in the comparative smoothness of his language and verse; but in his lyric poetry, at least, he is quite untouched by the new inspiration.

In his lyric motives he shows the fondness, noted in Turberville, for unusual and striking situations. His method seems to be to take over the titles and imagery of familiar themes into unrelated fields of emotion, so as to create, for each poem so treated, an artificial interest. For example, in the *Divorce of a Lover*,¹ the connotation of the title is the basis for a contrast with the real theme, as announced in the first line:—

“Divorce me nowe, good death, from love and lingering
Life.”

So in the *Lullabye of a Lover*,² the poet, through the imagery of the slumber-song, bids farewell to youth and its pleasures:—

“First lullaby my youthfull yeares,
It is nowe time to go to bed,” etc.

There is a strong narrative tendency in Gascoigne's work, which shows itself in a disposition to join lyrics in series, or to comment upon them, either in prose or verse. Excellent illustrations are

¹ *Ibid.*, i. p. 41.

² *Ibid.*, p. 43.

the group of lyrics exchanged between the poet and a certain lady, which follow the verses *On the Looks of a Lover Enamoured*,¹ and the series called *Gascoigne's Memories*.² This narrative vein recalls the elaborate titles of the first miscellanies, which sought to explain beforehand the situation from which the lyric arose. Perhaps also the tendency is part of the new habit of connecting a series of lyrics by unity either of subject or of mood, or by some external theme, as in the *Shepherds Calender*, where Spenser adopts the same assistance of narrative introduction and comment.

The moral strain indicated in the subjects of the *Divorce of a Lover*, and the *Lullaby*, serves as inspiration for the two religious lyrics, *Gascoigne's Good-morrow*³ and *Gascoigne's Good-night*.⁴ Slightly fantastic in imagery, but devout and meditative in spirit, they seem nearer to Herbert than to the old moralizing poems. In lyrical feeling the *De Profundis*⁵ is more ambitious. It is an elaborate paraphrase of the fifty-first psalm:—

“ Before the breake or dawning of the daye,
 Before the light be seene in loftye skyes,
 Before the sunne appeare in pleasaunt wyse,
 Before the watche (before the watche I saye)
 Before the warde that waytes therefore alwaye :
 My soule, my sense, my secrete thoughte, my sprite,
 My wyll, my wishe, my ioye, and my delight :

¹ *Complete Poems of George Gascoigne*, p. 45.

² *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

Unto the Lord that sittes in heaven on highe.
With hastye wing,
From me doeth fling,
And stryveth styll, unto the Lorde to flye."

Gascoigne seems to inherit much of his literary machinery from Chaucer rather than from Italy. In external form, for example, he frequently recalls Chaucer's ballades, as in the *Shield of Love*;¹ in many other lyrics he employs an envoy. In some poems, like the *Spring Song*,² he resorts to astronomy, in Chaucer's manner, to fix the time of the year, and he makes the same heterogeneous use of mythology and classical literature to furnish illustrations of his meaning.³

Of the poems in Thomas Churchyard's *Chips*, 1575, only two are lyrics.⁴ The first, the *Praise of Our Soldiers*,⁵ has a biographical as well as literary interest, since the poet himself had borne arms. He expresses a perennial soldier's point of view, the obligation of the men at home to those who secure peace for them by service in the field. It has been suggested that Churchyard's life as a soldier kept him free from "tedious classical allusions."⁶ Whatever be the reason, his style is very straightforward and manly, and in the last lines of this particular lyric, he attains a certain elevation in describing the character of his "happy warriors." His praise is not for mercenaries, he says, but for —

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 365.

² *Ibid.*, p. 53, *In praise of Bridges*.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 357.

⁴ *Churchyard's Chips*, Collier Reprint.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. ii.

"Those whose minds and noble manners shows
In peace and war, lo ! there a soldier goes ;
Of life most clear, of deed and word full just,
In trial still a man of special trust."

The other lyric poem is the hymn or song in the entertainment prepared for the Queen's visit to Bristow.¹ It is a practical song, not an art-lyric, for it was intended for music. The account says :
- "thear was a speetch to be sayd and an imme to be songe; the speeche was left out by an occasion unlooked for, but the imme was songe by a very fien boye."² The "imme," written in the "poulter's measure," congratulates the town on the august presence, and wishes for the Queen freedom from rebellion and treachery.³

It has become obvious, by this time, that the quality of lyric poetry since Wyatt and Surrey was steadily declining. The inspiration of their Italian scholarship brought but a momentary exaltation to the verse of their comrades and imitators. Now, however, in 1579, the impulse returned with abiding power in Spenser's *Shepheards Calender*,⁴ the first unequivocal appearance of lyric genius in Eliza-

¹ *Churchyard's Chips*, p. 222.

² *Ibid.*, p. 221.

³ A number of very minor poets, belonging to this period, such as Thomas Howell, Robert Prickett, Charles Fitz-Jeffrey, and others, have been reprinted by Dr. A. B. Grosart in his *Occasional Issues*. In every case the editor's industry is more remarkable than the poetry. In this study we shall consider our duty to such forgotten rimesters more than done when we have mentioned their collective existence.

⁴ *Works of Edmund Spenser*, R. Morris. London, 1899, p. 439 sq.

bethan song. Comparatively, there was a certain indefiniteness about the poems of Wyatt and Surrey; they appeared in a disorderly arrangement, side by side with the inferior verses of other men, they represented a polite accomplishment, not the life-work, of their authors, and they appeared after those authors were dead. Spenser, on the other hand, superintended the publishing of his own poems, deliberately seeking fame as a poet, and through the unity of his general plan of a calendar, got away, once for all, from the miscellany disorder.

It is apparent at once that he derives his inspiration from Virgil rather than from Italian sources. The familiar themes remain, but the poet expresses them in a new manner. The external rhythms and stanza-forms are indeed only more delicate uses of well-known material. It is in the studied treatment of theme, the natural grouping of images, and above all, in the development of the lyric emotion, that Spenser attains the first considerable height in Elizabethan song. After reading the lyrics scattered through these eclogues, it is plain that most of the earlier love-plaints and elegies, even those by Wyatt, have little inherent form; the phrases expressing love or grief might follow each other equally well in any other order, since they all mean the same thing, and the emotional state of the poet is the same throughout. But this point of view may be brought out more easily in an examination of Spenser's lyrics.

The first, in the eclogue for January,¹ is a love-plaint. Both theme and stanza might be traced through the miscellanies, or the poet may have found a model in Virgil, perhaps in the tenth eclogue. This poem, though not the best in the *Calender*, is a good illustration of the careful design that all Spenser's lyrics show. The shepherd, in the late winter, sings of his hard-hearted love, Rosalind. The general landscape, the bare fields, make him draw a parallel in his own forlorn state. Then, finding a nearer image in the trees above him, he illustrates his grief by the icy tears on the boughs. In an image still nearer, he likens his disordered thoughts to the uncared-for flock about him, and then sums up the emotion of the three images in curses on the day when first he saw Rosalind, the cause of his woe. A natural reaction follows; he explains that he is not entirely deserted, for Hobbinol seeks his friendship. But only Rosalind can please him; and since neither he nor his song can win her, he breaks his shepherd's pipe, and gives over singing. It will be seen from this summary, that not only is the arrangement of the subject-matter organic, but the emotional state of the poet's mind undergoes a natural change, from a general, almost inarticulate, mood of grief, in sympathy with the winter landscape, to a definite mental resolution, in the breaking of the pipe and the end of the wooing.

Works of Edmund Spenser, p. 446.



The second lyric occurs in the eclogue for April,¹ and is a song in praise of Queen Elizabeth. This conventional compliment is saved from the usual commonplace only by the genius of the poet. The lyric is idyllic, depending for its structure upon pictures, as here of the Muses; in the third stanza a detailed portrait of the Queen is drawn; in the ninth, a picture of the Graces; in the tenth, a picture of the "ladies of the lake," or nymphs. The lyric is weak in the lack of emotional development, since the same mood continues throughout; but at least the emotion is sustained. This kind of lyrical idyl is a favorite with Spenser, appearing in its most elaborate example in the *Epithalamium*. It is worth remarking that Webbe, in his *Discourse of English Poetrie*, 1587, chose this song to turn into Sapphics.²

The next two lyrics are in the eclogue for August.³ The first is the roundelay, "It fell upon a holy eve," quoted already in *England's Helicon*. This species of lyric seems to have been subject to but few rules with the Elizabethans; Webbe's description of it is that it is "called a round, beeing mutuallie sung betweene two: one singeth one verse, the other the next, eche rymeth with himself."⁴ But it appears in this and other examples, that there is a difference between the two

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 454.

² Arber's Reprint, 1896, p. 82.

³ Spenser's *Works*, p. 470.

⁴ *Discourse of English Poetrie*, p. 61.

voices; the first carries the theme of the song, and keeps the strict measure of the verse, while the second, paraphrasing the theme of his comrade, takes liberties with the rhythm, in this particular example making free use of the syncopated foot. No matter how few the syllables, there are four accents to the line; as: —

- “ *Per.* It féll upón a hólý éve,
Wil. Héy, hó, hólídaye !
Per. When hólý fáthers wónt to shríeve ;
Wil. Now gýnneth this róundelay.
Per. Sítting ón a híll so hýe,
Wil. Héy, hó, the hígh hýll ! ” etc.¹

The second lyric in this eclogue is notable only for its stanza. It is an example of the *sestina*, and will be considered later in connection with that complicated form.²

In the eclogue for November there is a funeral song or elegy, which, in the manner in which it represents phases of grief, is the first in English to follow the Greek pastoral model, as illustrated by the lament of Moschus for Bion. In the prefatory note it is stated that Spenser is here imitating Clément Marot's eclogue on the death of Queen Loys, and a comparison of the two poems would show as much. But either from taste or from literary training, the English poet is less florid, speaks with more ease under the mask of

¹ See Schelling's *Elizabethan Lyrics*, 1895, Introduction, p. xlv.

² See below, chap. ix, p. 285.

the pastoral convention, and in the ordering of his subject-matter is nearer to the Greek model. In the lament for Bion, and in the English poems of the same general pattern, such as this elegy of Spenser's, Milton's *Lycidas*, Shelley's *Adonais* and Arnold's *Thyrsis*, there are three stages in the development of the emotion, according as the intellectual element gradually combines with the expression of grief. The first part of the elegy gives the lyric stimulus in stating the cause of grief, for which the usual formula is the invocation to the Muse and the shepherds to bewail the death of their favorite. Toward the end of the first section, when the expression of sorrow, becoming more subdued and coherent, turns to the picture of happier days in the past, one shepherd or shepherdess is mentioned as the special comrade and mourner of the dead. Moschus sings "Yea, and Galatea laments thy song, she whom once thou wouldst delight, as with thee she sat by the sea-banks."¹ In Marot the chief mourner is "Le grand berger," the king; in Spenser, it is Lobbin: —

"O thou greate shepheard, Lobbin, how great is thy grieve!
Where bene the nosegayes that she dight for thee?"²

In the second stage of the Greek elegy, the poet, recovering from the first extreme grief, sings those doubts and questionings of the justice of fate, which seem native to all human mourning. The

¹ *Theocritus, Bion and Moschus*, Andrew Lang, 2d ed. 1901, p. 199.

² Spenser's *Works*, p. 481.

questions usually are two: why should the withered flower revive in the spring, while man, once dead, lives never again? and, why should this one be taken, and less worthy lives spared? In the words of Moschus—"Ah me, when the mallows wither in the garden, and the green parsley, and the curled tendrils of the anise, on a later day they live again, and spring in another year; but we men, we, the great and mighty, or wise, when once we have died, in hollow earth we sleep, gone down into silence." . . . "And thou too, in the earth will be lapped in silence, but the nymphs have thought good that the frogs should eternally sing."¹ These questions, it needs small scholarship to know, are conventional expressions of grief, found in all literatures, and it is not surprising that Spenser uses them both, following closely the Greek formula.

In the third and last division of this form of elegy the mind takes refuge from the problems touched in the preceding part, in some consolation of philosophy or religion. The original emotion of grief is faint or dies out altogether here; the lyric mood ends in the reëstablishment of the intellect. In Moschus the consolation is found in the honor that will come to Bion in the lower world: "Sing

¹ Lang, p. 201. In Marot only the first question appears:—

"D'où vient cela qu'on voit l'herbe sechante
Retourner vive alors que l'esté vient,
Et la personne au tombeau trebuschante,
Tant grande soit, jamais plus ne revient?"

—*Œuvres Complètes*, Pierre Jannet, Paris, 1873, ii. p. 264.

to the Maiden [Persephone] some strain of Sicily, sing some sweet pastoral lay. . . . Not unrewarded will the singer be; and as once to Orpheus's sweet minstrelsy she gave Eurydice to return with him, even so will she send thee too, Bion, to the hills."¹ Spenser finds his consolation in contemplating the heavenly joy into which his dead shepherdess enters. Marot does the same thing, and in both poets the Christian paradise is thinly disguised under a description of a pagan bower of bliss.

Spenser does not preserve these three phases of the elegy in the same natural order as in the Greek model, but following Marot's example, he recurs at intervals to the first mood of grief. The effect is to obscure the clear movement of the emotion, and to make its expression seem more diffuse than it is. A more serious criticism, however, is that the second phase, the intellectual questioning, is placed nearer the beginning than the end of the lyric. This necessitates a break in the emotion, which seems out of keeping with the natural course of such grief.

This elegy is considered at length, and compared

¹ Lang, p. 202. In Marot the equivalent passage is:—

“Elle est au Champs Elisiens receue,
Hors des travaux de ce monde exploré.
Là où elle est n'y a rien defloré;
Jamais le jour et les plaisirs n'y meurent;
Jamais n'y meurt le vert bien coloré,
Ne ceulx avec qui là dedans demeurent.”

—Jannet, ii. p. 266.

with the more famous Greek dirge, because it is the first example in English of this type of funeral song, which later reappears so splendidly in the examples already mentioned. Its advance over the "epitaphs" of the miscellanies is obvious. They had only the first and third parts of the elegy, the expression of grief and the consolation, without any transition, and sometimes they omitted the element of consolation. But a more important difference, in the light of later elegies, is the convention of beauty which the Greek form, as practised by Marot and Spenser, introduced. The subject of the elegy is exalted to a height of ideal beauty, and all thoughts of him are clothed in images drawn from the lovelier aspects of nature. The frailty of life, for example, which in the miscellany epitaphs is formulated into "all flesh is as grass," or variations of that truism, is now expressed in the kindred but more beautiful convention:—

"Whence is it, that the flouret of the field doth fade,
And lyeth buried long in Winters bale;
Yet, soone as spring his mantle hath displayde,
It floureth fresh, as it should never fayle?
But thing on earth that is of most availe,
As vertues branch and beauties budde,
Reliven not for any good."¹

The mere fact that the poet questions, instead of dogmatizing, as in the miscellanies, shows a truer dramatic conception of the mood of grief.

¹ Spenser's *Works*, p. 481.

In the use of refrains in this elegy, Spenser was undoubtedly following his own taste, but had he needed a model, he might have found one in Moschus. Marot in his eclogue has but an approximation to a refrain.

The last song in the *Calender* is found in the eclogue for December.¹ In intention it is a love-plaint; the poet bids farewell to Rosalind, who will have no pity on him. A certain interest attaches to the introduction of the familiar comparison of life to the four seasons. The entire song is devoted to the celebration of this figure, which is too inevitable to need further comment.

Undoubtedly the charm of the *Shepherds Calender* is the presence in it of great poetic genius—a thing not to be analyzed by historians or critics. But so far as elusive qualities can be traced, the distinction of these lyrics is the very considerable art with which they are written. They are taken entirely out of the realm of song in its practical sense, and are made doubly “literary” by the suggestions of classic form which have been noticed. Spenser, like the Greeks, conceives of the lyric as an emotional organism, with a beginning, middle, and end; and in his external formulas he returns, as has been said, to that classic habit of mind which expressed even the sorrowful experiences of life in terms of beauty.

The pastoral vein, introduced so auspiciously in

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 484.

the *Shepheards Calender*, dominates the literature of the ten years from 1580 to 1590, reaching its most highly wrought expression in the latter year, in Sidney's *Arcadia*. During this decade appeared the romances of Robert Greene and Thomas Lodge, some of which were enriched with incidental lyrics. Those in Greene's early romances are of very slight merit, and class themselves with examples already seen in the miscellanies. For example, in *Arbasto*, 1584, occurs a song on fortune:—

“Whereat erewhile I wept, I laugh,
That which I feared I now despise,” etc.¹

The subject is developed in a series of such contrasted verses to show the evolutions of fortune's wheel. In *Penelopes Web*, 1587, there is a song in praise of content,² and one in praise of the “mean estate,” — “The stately state that wise men count their good.”³ A third lyric is devoted to a warning against ambition.⁴ These four poems are typical of Greene's first style. Like the early miscellany lyrics, they find their inspiration in rather abstract themes, their purpose is largely moral, and the execution is extremely simple.

Greene's second style, if a further division of his work be not considered too subtle, is illustrated by three songs in *Perymedes the Blacksmith*, 1588. In technic and metrical achievement they are little in

¹ *Works*, in *The Huth Library*, iii. p. 180.

² *Ibid.*, v. p. 179.

³ *Ibid.*, v. p. 165.

⁴ *Ibid.*, v. p. 188.

advance of the first group; they employ no other stanza, for example, than the scheme *ababcc*. But the subject-matter is enriched in all three lyrics by the ornament of classical legends and myths — one phase of the Renaissance influence from the Continent. The first deals with the story of Venus and Adonis, treated partly as an idyl, partly as a lyric.¹ The lyric tone is helped by the use of the last line in each stanza as a refrain. In this song a sensual view of life is presented, which is contradicted in the companion-song, "The syron Venus nourist in hir lap," in a very moral, if not so convincing, manner. This second song fits well with the repentant side of Greene, as it appears in the *Groatsworth of Wit*; it also echoes the old gnomic or moral songs, as in this stanza: —

"If crooked age accounteth youth his spring,
The spring, the fairest season of the year,
Enriched with flowers and sweets, and many a thing,
That fair and gorgeous to the eyes appear;
It fits that youth, the spring of man, should be
Riched with such flowers as virtue yieldeth thee."²

The third song is essentially a *pastourelle*, a description of a wooing between shepherd and shepherdess. The only distinguishing feature in the treatment of the traditional theme is that the *débat*, or argument, is brief; the interest being centred in the charm and humor of the characters, for which the reader is prepared by idyllic descrip-

¹ *Ibid.*, vii. p. 88.

² *Ibid.*, vii. p. 89.

tions in the early stanzas. The lyric appeals simply to the delight in pastoral poetry; there is no dramatic struggle in the *débat*, since both the lovers were ready to plight their troth.

"This love began and ended both in one;
Phyllis was loved, and she loved Coridon."¹

In the same romance two other songs should be mentioned, not for their literary merit, which is slight, but because they are written in blank verse. With the exception of some passages in the drama, blank verse lyrics are rare in Elizabeth's time, and even these two examples concede so much to rime as to end in a couplet.²

Of Greene's third style the best illustrations are the songs in *Menaphon*, 1589. These are love-songs, either plaints or praises, of which the subject-matter is not particularly new. The external form, however, shows the arrival of the period of elaborate stanzas, to be further represented by Lodge and Sidney in their romances. The first good illustration of this type in *Menaphon*, is the lyric, —

"Some say Love,
Foolish Love,
Doth rule and govern all the gods," etc.³

The song, "Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee,"⁴ in the same romance, is a new phase of the

¹ *Works*, in *The Huth Library*, vii. p. 93.

² *Ibid.*, vii. pp. 77, 79.

³ Bullen, *Songs from the Dramatists*, 1901, p. 237.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

lullaby; the infant is evidently the child of an illicit love. On this dark-toned background, which from this time is often used to heighten the effect of such slumber-songs, the lullaby departs definitely from its old association with the Christ-child, and loses the purity which that association had given it in the Middle English lyric.

Besides these three styles of song, Greene several times revived the old combination of French and English verses. In *Never too Late*, 1590, the complaint of Venus to Adonis, "Sweet Adon, darrest not glance thine eye,"¹ is the best example. The first and third lines carry on the lyric; the second, fourth, fifth, and sixth are constant refrains in every stanza:—

"See how sad thy Venus lies, —
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami ? —
 Love in heart, and tears in eyes;
Je vous en prie, pity me;
N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami ?"²

Mullidor's "madrigal," in *Francesco's Fortunes*,³ 1590, is another illustration of the same device; the French lines, however, are fewer and the rhythm is anapestic.

Lodge's lyrics show less striving for stanzaic effect than Greene's, but they are richer and more sonorous in tone. The difference may largely be ascribed to the individual genius of each, but Lodge

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

² *Ibid.*, p. 247.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 255.

seems to have gained something from wide reading in Italian and French poetry. In *A Margarite of America*, 1589, he translates several Italian and French sonnets, giving the names of the authors.¹ His indebtedness to Desportes takes the form of direct translation, as in the lyric, "The earth late choked with showers," from Scylla's *Metamorphosis*, 1589,² the song, "First shall the heaven want starry light," from *Rosalind*, 1590,³ and "Turn I my looks unto the skies," from the same romance.⁴ The influence of Ronsard is hinted at by many critics, but can hardly be traced directly. If it exists at all, it is hidden in the spirit of Lodge's work.

The first lyric that shows Lodge's distinctive quality is *Rosalind's* madrigal, "Love in my bosom like a bee."⁵ This song makes its appeal entirely through sensuous images, not derived, like Greene's, from classical tales, such as that of Venus and Adonis, but stimulated directly in the poem by the constant presence of physical beauty, as if the poet were describing a luxurious painting by Titian or his school.⁶

The companion poem to this is the description of *Rosalind* in the same romance, "Like to the clear in

¹ *A Margarite of America*, J. O. Halliwell, 1859, p. 112 sq.

² Bullen, p. 264.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 270. For the French original, see note, p. 297.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 265.

⁶ The kinship of Lodge's word-painting with contemporary Italian art is admirably suggested by Professor Palgrave in the *Golden Treasury*, 2d ed. 1894, p. 351.

highest sphere, etc.”¹ This lyric follows the familiar method of such descriptions, giving a systematic inventory of the lady’s charms from head to foot; but it differs from the innumerable other examples in its great wealth of color, its lyric enthusiasm, and a certain good taste and restraint. If the favor of anthologists be proof of merit, this lyric is the best illustration of its type in Elizabethan poetry.

In these songs, Lodge seems to have found the happy medium in combinations of long and short lines — a rare achievement with his contemporaries. It has been observed before that the simpler the stanza the nearer is the lyric to practical song; and the greater the variations in length of verse, the more slowly the song will move and the less like winged words. Lodge varies the line often, but never to a marked degree, so that the rhythm escapes monotony without losing speed.

With Lodge and Greene should be mentioned Nicholas Breton, a writer of romances highly praised by his contemporaries, but now somewhat lacking in distinction. In his *Flourish upon Fancy*, 1577, there is a carol, “Now Christmas draweth near,”² which continues the traditional description of English Christmas customs. The *Arbours of Amorous Devices*, 1593, contains a lullaby, “Come,

¹ *Complete Works*, printed for the Hunterian Club, 1883, i. p. 64.

² *Lyrics from Elizabethan Romances*, A. H. Bullen, 1890, p. 89.

little babe, come, silly soul,"¹ which in subject appears to imitate Greene's "Weep not, my wanton," published four years earlier. Breton always inclined to the simple stanzas and long, narrative manner of the miscellanies. His lyrics are too diffuse. This trait is illustrated by one of his last and best songs, "I would I had as much as might be had," from *I would and I would not*, 1614.²

The most interesting of the romances, from the historical standpoint, is Sidney's *Arcadia*, 1590. In subjects and metrical experiments it is the most ambitious, but it contains few successful lyrics. Among the usual love-themes, there are two descriptions of a lover's mistress, which may be compared with Lodge's *Rosalind*, and much to the latter's advantage. The first is the short lyric in alternate alexandrines and septenaries, in praise of Mopsa—a conventional enumeration of feminine charms, without much lyric feeling.³ The second, however, is one of the important songs in the book, the description of Philocleia.⁴ It is an excellent illustration of the bad taste that seems to have accompanied this theme wherever it appeared. The description is very minute, and with good reason the reader feels that the poet had a definite model before him; for in the romance it is Philocleia's lover who sings the song, having

¹ *Lyrics from Elizabethan Romances*, p. 92.

² *Ibid.*, p. 117.

³ *The Countesse of Pembroke's Arcadia*, 1627, p. 11.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

surreptitiously caught sight of his lady at her bath. The unchivalrous device by which this situation is achieved — the disguise of the lover as a waiting-maid — detracts from the charm of the song, and the beauty seems tainted. In other respects, also, in the completeness of the details and the absence of any such reverence as exalted the picture of Rosalind, Sidney's poem seems far inferior in taste to Lodge's.

There is one epithalamium in the romance. It does not follow classical models beyond the use of a refrain.¹ It is simply an expression of good wishes for the married couple, without any such order or sequence as is found in Spenser's *Epithalamium*.

It is significant that of all the lyrics in the *Arcadia*, only the song, "My true love hath my heart,"² has been remembered in our literature. The songs as a whole represent the experimental side of Sidney's art; and while noteworthy for their wide range of form, they are singularly lacking in lyric emotion or any mark of genuineness. It is as the richest of the romances that the *Arcadia* is known. Sidney's fame as a lyrist, on the other hand, rests on the songs and sonnets of *Astrophel and Stella*. This book, published in 1591, gave the definite impulse to sonnet writing which characterized this next decade.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 388.

² *Ibid.*, p. 357.

CHAPTER V

THE SONNET-SERIES

I

THE sonnet, in both the Italian and the English forms, became naturalized in English literature by the practice of Wyatt and Surrey. Their chief model was Petrarch, and they followed him in confining the use of the sonnet to love-plaints or to very personal expressions. It will be remembered that in *Tottel's Miscellany*, the lyrics devoted to the emotions of the typical lover are usually in the "poulter's measure," and tend to class themselves together. On the other hand the sonnets, though devoted to the same subject, are so far new to English literature that each example remains distinct. When the general use of the long septenaries was declining, and the tendency toward collections of lyrics was taking an artistic form, as in the *Shepherds Calender*, it was but natural that the sonnet should reappear in its original Petrarchan use, as the unit in an autobiographical series.

This use of the sonnet, which characterizes the years from 1590 to 1600, was not a matter of sudden innovation, but one of growth. Of the few steps

in the development that are now visible to us, the principal illustration is Thomas Watson's *Hekatompathia, or Passionate Centurie of Love*, printed in 1582.¹ This is a collection of a hundred "passions," or themes of love. They are supposed to show the different sufferings of one lover, and in that respect, as well as in the verse-form, they have a certain unity. But so far are they removed from any narrative continuity, such as is imposed upon Shakespeare's sonnets, or from any basis of fact, that they are collected almost at haphazard, one of them as an after-thought,² and the poet admits in the preface that all his love-passions are imaginary.³ In these traits the collection probably resembles most of the later sequences. Its early date is responsible for the use of a familiar stanza instead of the sonnet-form.

For the period in which they appeared, these lyrics were felt to be extremely scholarly, so that the author, or the editor, thought it necessary to prefix a commentary to each poem. This device is akin to the long narrative titles in the miscellanies, but differs from them in supplying true commentaries, and not prose introductions to the lyrics. A nearer parallel is the use of notes in the *Shepheards*

¹ Arber Reprint, 1895.

² See Introduction to No. xlv. p. 81.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 27. "Yet for this once I hope that thou wilt in respect of my travaille in penning these love passions, or for pitie of my paines in suffering them (although but supposed) . . . etc."

Calender, and, for a more illustrious example, the explanatory commentaries to the various lyrics in the *Vita Nuova*. Besides a summary of the poem, Watson's introductions contain frank acknowledgments of indebtedness to other poets; so that each borrowed theme can be readily traced, and the wide range of Watson's reading appreciated. Petrarch is his chief source of inspiration, then Ronsard; after them, the Latin poems of Stephanus Forcatulus, extracts from Sophocles, Theocritus, and Horace, and the poems of Seraphini, Girolamo Parabosco, and other Italian lyrists. Forty-one of the hundred lyrics are thus confessed to be paraphrases.

The subject-matter falls into two very general classes. The first seventy-eight poems deal with the "true estate and perturbations" of love; the rest are printed under the emblem "My love is past," and express the renunciation of love.¹ In these two classes the traditional themes are all found, though their treatment is inclined to be either pedantic or fantastic. The poet delights in such propositions as that he "abideth more unrest and hurt for his beloved, than ever did Leander for his Hero,"² or "he doubteth lest those flames, wherein his soule continually burneth, shall make Charon afraid to grant him passage over the lake of Stix, by reason, his old withered boat is apt to take fire."³

¹ See Introduction to No. lxxix. p. 115.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

² *Ibid.*, p. 66.

There are no autobiographical incidents whatever in the series.

This collection is valuable chiefly as an indication of the new fashion at hand. As poetry, judged by itself, it has little claim on immortality. It is of the quality of the poorer miscellany poems, though the manner is that of a trained rhetorician. The similarity to the miscellany verse appears also in fantastic tricks of style, as in the anagram-lyric, in which the first letters form the quotation, *Amor me pungit et urit*.¹ There is also an echo-sonnet, in which the final phrase of each sentence is repeated:—

Author. “In all this world I thinke none love's but I.

Echo. None love's but I. *Author.* Thou foolish tattling
ghost,
in this thou telst a lie. *Echo.* Thou telst a lie,”
etc.²

One song is constructed upon the rhetorical principle called by the commentator *reduplicatio*, according to which every clause begins with some word or phrase in the end of the preceding clause.³ This method remains a favorite device of style with the sonneteers. Watson's most absurd exhibition of scholasticism, however, is the *Pasquine Piller erected in the Despite of Love*,⁴ a lyric printed in the shape of a column, to be read only with the greatest difficulty, but as a compensation, following out a mathematical order in the words, upon which the author evidently prided himself. Such technical curiosi-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 88. ² *Ibid.*, p. 61. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 77. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

ties are most familiar to the reader of English literature in the works of the seventeenth century fantastic school, of whom, in this one respect, Watson should be considered a forerunner.

The general structure of this song-series, it should be remembered, was not that of continuous subject-matter; its only unity consisted in the general theme of love, and in the single verse-form employed. The same criticism is true of the first real sonnet-series, Henry Constable's *Spiritual Sonnettes to the Honour of God and Hys Sayntes*,¹ 1591. These seventeen sonnets, *To God the Father*, *To the Blessed Sacrament*, *To Our Blessed Lady*, etc., have no other connection but the general theological tone of the subjects. It was the fashion to write religious occasional poems, and to pretend to think more of such performances than of secular verses, but these sonnets are not the most important of Constable's work. They are chiefly remarkable for the employment throughout of the Petrarchan form, and for using that form for other themes than those of love.

This modest little collection is completely overshadowed by *Astrophel and Stella*,² published the same year, a sonnet-series that is thought to have given the impulse and form to the numerous later collections. It was the most celebrated book of the sonnet period, and even now gives way only to

¹ *The Sonnets and Other Poems of Henry Constable*, W. C. Hazlitt, 1859, p. 49 sq.

² Arber's *English Garner*, i.

Shakspeare's. The sonnets fall into two groups, those having an autobiographical intention, and those dealing with conventional themes, more or less linked with the other class, such as the sonnet to the moon, or the one to sleep. From the autobiographical group, a slight sequence of action can be arranged, which fits well with the known facts of Sidney's love affairs. The first eighty-five sonnets deal with the wooing of Stella, who is married; the rest tell how the poet left her from a sense of honor, although she loved him, and how he overcame his passion for her. The basis in fact for this seems to be that Stella, the Lady Penelope Devereux, was at some time proposed as a bride for Sidney, but was married by her friends, against her will, to Lord Rich. She was very unhappy in her marriage, and finally, after Sidney's death, obtained a divorce. Sidney does not appear to have cared much for her until after she was married; then, when it was too late, he came to appreciate her charms, and addressed the sonnets to her. That she loved him is made probable by the cruel treatment she received from her husband, and by the fact that after Sidney's death she was addressed by complimentary poets as his love — a liberty they could hardly have taken had it displeased her.¹

¹ For general discussions of this subject, cf. Arber's *English Garner*, i. p. 467 sq.; Hubert Hall's *Society in the Elizabethan Age*, pp. 90-91; and Dr. Grosart's Introduction, *Poems of Sidney*, 1877.

Perhaps because Sidney did not intend to publish the sonnets, they are more intimate in tone and appear more genuine than those of Petrarch or his French imitators; to Sidney's contemporaries, *Astrophel and Stella* seemed a revelation of the poet's soul. He puts forth his claim to sincerity in the famous phrase of the first sonnet, "look in thy heart and write,"¹ and recurs to it several times.² As the series progresses, however, the claim relapses into the conventional compliment that he writes not for fame, but because her beauty moves the pen—a theme that had helped on many a French sonneteer.

Next to this theme of the source of his inspiration, Sidney takes up the conflict between love and virtue. In view of the persistence with which it haunts him,³ this motive can be explained only by the theory that Lady Penelope was already married. Fourteen sonnets are devoted entirely to this theme, and it appears at times in others. According to the sonnets, Stella encouraged her lover to be true to his nobler self, and would pardon not even the one kiss he stole when she was asleep.⁴

In the first part of the series, there are several descriptions of Stella, from which it would appear that she had black eyes.⁵ The other details of her beauty, fair hair, white cheeks, red lips, are not

¹ *English Garner*, i. p. 503.

⁴ No. lxxiii.

² Cf. Nos. iii, xv, liv, xc, etc.

⁵ No. vii.

³ Cf. Nos. iv, v, x, xlv, xviii, xxi, etc.

distinctive. These latter charms were familiar through the Italian and French lyrics; after Sidney, however, the English sonneteers were partial to the black eyes.

Besides the several disagreeable sonnets satirizing Lord Rich,¹ the most important lyrics in the first part of the series are those built on images from the profession of arms. The tournament,² the siege,³ skill with the quarter-staff,⁴ and horsemanship,⁵ all are vividly pictured. Probably the most charming of this class, and the best known, is the sonnet to the roadway that leads to Stella: —

“Highway, since you my chief Parnassus be.”⁶

The last part of the series, in which Astrophel leaves Stella at her request, though she loves him —

“Stella ! while now, by honour’s cruel might,
I am from you,”⁷

has not the interest of the first part, especially as the series first was printed. With the addition of the sonnets recovered from the manuscripts, above all the noble sonnet that now ends the series in some editions, —

“Leave me, O love ! which reachest but to dust,”

the poet’s final state of mind is made clearer and more satisfactory.

¹ Nos. *xxiv*, *xxxviii*, etc.

⁴ No. *liii*.

⁶ No. *lxxxiv*.

² No. *xli*.

⁵ No. *xlix*.

⁷ No. *xci*.

³ No. *xlii*.

Among the non-biographical sonnets, the address to the moon¹ and the prayer to sleep² are the best known. Introduced merely for their own sake, and usually translated or borrowed from French sonnets, this decorative class of lyrics is nevertheless bound into the series both by the turns of love-compliments introduced at the end, and by Sidney's personality, which is as discernible in these as it is in the biographical sonnets. The full scope of Sidney's art is not grasped until we realize with what precision he has made these decorative poems fit the mood of the lover at the stage of the sequence in which they are introduced. It is by this dramatic arrangement of his themes that he secures the most subtle unity of the lyrics, and in this success he seems to be a pioneer. It will be profitable to note how far his English successors aim for this structural skill, or attain to it.

At intervals among the sonnets of *Astrophel and Stella* Sidney interpolated eleven songs. In general these lyrics are considered inferior to the sonnets, with two notable exceptions. If we are to trust the autobiographical interpretation of the series, the eighth song gives explicitly the reasons why Stella rejects her suitor, and the high ideal of honor she points out for him. The meter, as well as the subject, deserves attention. It is the first important example of the trochaic tetrapody catalectic, though occasional glimpses of it have already been noted:—

¹ No. **xxx**i.

² No. **xxx**ix.

"If to secret of my heart,
 I do any wish impart,
 Where thou art not foremost placed,
 Be both wish and I defaced.
 * * * * *
 "Trust me, while I thee deny,
 In myself the smart I try.
 Tyrant Honour doth thus use thee.
 Stella's self might not refuse thee!"¹

The other song, remembered for its literary beauty alone, is the first:—

"Doubt you to whom my Muse these notes intendeth;
 Which now my breast o'ercharged with music lendeth?
 To *you!* to *you!* all song of praise is due:
 Only in *you*, my song begins and endeth.

"Who hath the eyes which marry State with Pleasure?
 Who keeps the key of Nature's chiefest treasure?
 To *you!* to *you!* all song of praise is due:
 Only for *you*, the heaven forgot all measure."²

This is a fair illustration of those Elizabethan lyrics which, employing conscious effects of art, still keep some quality of spontaneous song. It is purely an art-lyric; the verbal music is sufficient of itself. It recalls the old miscellany poetry only in the device of questions and answers, which was noticed in Grimald, and is here used for every stanza. Sidney's fondness for refrains, which indeed he shares with most of his contemporaries, appears here in the unusual internal refrain of the third line. This line is really composed of two

¹ *English Garner*, i. p. 574.

² *Ibid.*, p. 558.

short staves, riming together. If they be taken as a single line, the stanza then has the effect of Fitzgerald's Omar quatrain. Finally, Sidney's careful workmanship is seen in the exact distribution of masculine and feminine rimes.

The importance of *Astrophel and Stella* lay in its intensely personal quality. This had two results: it gave Sidney's own sonnets an effect of unity, by relating them all to his passion, thus setting a standard of such unity for the sonnets that were to come; and it revived for this decade the practice of sincere self-revelation, the subjective lyric quality, which in the Petrarchan imitators had become almost confessedly a mask.

In the next year, 1592, appeared Samuel Daniel's *Delia*,¹ which to the literary student must always suggest the two great sequences. It recalls *Astrophel and Stella*, because Delia is almost certainly Sidney's sister Mary, Countess of Pembroke; it is associated with Shakspeare because it illustrates the first extended use of his sonnet-form. It is at first surprising that these sonnets show so little of Sidney's influence, but it is not hard to find the explanation. The Countess of Pembroke was Daniel's patroness, and out of gratitude he wished to celebrate her in his art. His love, to say the least, was disinterested, and never quite distinguishable from respectful friendship. Five sonnets of the first edition, the third, eighth, tenth, twelfth, and six-

¹ *Elizabethan Sonnet-Cycles*, Martha F. Crow, ii.

teenth, he afterward omitted, apparently because they were vehement in their declaration of passion. With the intention, then, of "eternizing" his lady in this distant manner, he could hardly use the burning art of Sidney; he could but imitate the most chivalrous phases of Petrarch's worship of Laura. Of course this meant simply to ignore the sincere note of *Astrophel*, and to return to the French models or to the subjective quality of Wyatt's love-plaints. This low temperature of the lyric passion is accompanied by a revival of old themes; for example, that of the lady's cruelty, Petrarch's familiar motive, on which fully half of the *Delia* sonnets are written. Sidney had escaped from the conventionality of this theme through the circumstances of his love, where honor dictated that he should not love at all; Stella thereby came almost to symbolize virtue, and Astrophel's love, in his own eyes, was terribly like desire, so that the repulses and final dismissal were not acts of cruelty, but triumphs of spiritual love. To offset this, however, the very conditions of Daniel's admiration for the Countess of Pembroke would persuade him to dwell on her intellectual and spiritual beauty rather than on physical charms, as Sidney had done. In one sonnet, the sixth, we might feel a suggestion of Platonic emphasis on the soul, often the motive of Spenser's love-poetry: —

"A modest maid, decked with a blush of honor,
Whose feet do tread green paths of youth and love ;

The wonder of all eyes that look upon her,
Sacred on earth, designed a saint above."¹

There is no narrative element in *Delia*, nor any progression in the lover's moods. The poet sings praises of his lady, or laments her cruelty, or introduces decorative themes—perhaps after Sidney's example, but more probably in direct imitation of French poets. The best of these incidental themes, and the most familiar sonnet, is the one on sleep:—

"Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable night."²

It has been pointed out that this is one of the favorite decorative themes of all the sonnet-series; evidently Sidney's sonnet is followed here.³ The famous image of the rose from canto sixteen of the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, afterwards entering our literature once for all in bk. iv, canto xii of the *Faerie Queene*, here serves a decorative purpose as translated in the thirty-sixth sonnet:—

"Look, Delia, how w' esteem the half-blown rose,
The image of thy blush, and summer's honor."⁴

Daniel introduces from Italian poetry the "eternizing" theme—the promise to make his love immortal by his verse. The idea of the deathless quality of poetry has been seen in the Anglo-Saxon song *Widsith*, where praise is rendered to the patron "free in gifts, who would be raised

¹ *Elizabethan Sonnet-Cycles*, ii. p. 21.

² *Ibid.*, p. 66.

³ See *Mod. Lang. Notes*, iv. 8, 229, and v. 1, 11.

⁴ *Elizabethan Sonnet-Cycles*, ii. p. 51.

among his friends to fame"; it is found also in Homer; but its most persistent expression is in the sonnet-sequences that follow Daniel. The fact that he introduced this theme, a favorite one later with Shakspeare, is another link to bind him with the great poet.

The main reason for considering the two names together is that Daniel uses largely the English sonnet of three quatrains and a couplet. Critics have objected that the form was in use long before *Delia* was written, and that the knowledge of it was general. But Daniel first discovered its proper development, to which Shakspeare added nothing—the gradual rise of emotion and thought to an epigrammatic climax in the last two lines, instead of the swell and fall of the Petrarchan stanza. In the ninth sonnet Daniel anticipates the very cadence of much of Shakspeare, where he begins each quatrain and the couplet with a subordinate clause, and completes the sense in the last lines:—

“ If this be love, to draw a weary breath,
 To paint on floods till the shore cry to th’ air ;
 * * * * * *
 If this be love, to war against my soul,
 Lie down to wail, rise up to sigh and grieve,
 * * * * * *
 If this be love, to clothe me with dark thoughts,
 Haunting untrodden paths to wail apart,
 * * * * * *
 If this be love, to live a living death,
 Then do I love and draw this weary breath.”¹

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

Daniel, like Shakspeare, frequently gives different versions of one theme. In that case he binds the sonnets together, either by making them grammatically dependent, as are sonnets six and seven, or more usually, by making the last line of each sonnet the first line of the next. A series on one theme thus bound together are sonnets thirty-six, thirty-seven, thirty-eight, thirty-nine, and forty. This method of concatenation has been observed already in the English lyric in the stanzas of Minot's poems, and perhaps should be referred ultimately to a similar stylistic device in Welsh poetry.

In several minor points Daniel recalls the lyrics of the miscellanies; as, to take an external trait, where he prefaces one sonnet by a title-introduction, which is necessary for understanding the poem: *Alluding to the Sparrow pursued by A Hawk, that flew into the Bosom of Zenocrates*.¹ In another sonnet he repeats the old thought—with more sincerity, no doubt, than most love-poets could—that his passion finds ample satisfaction in having aimed high.

"The mounting venture for a high delight
Did make the honor of the fall the more.

* * * * *

And therefore, Delia, 'tis to me no blot
To have attempted though attained thee not."²

Finally, two sonnets on going to Italy³ recall

¹ No. xxviii, p. 43.

³ Nos. xlix, p. 64, l, p. 65.

² No. xxxii, p. 47.

the old lyric theme of travel. The resemblance is strengthened by the patriotic apostrophe to *Albion*, in which, by the way, such a small thing as absence from Delia is quite forgotten in the more keenly felt absence from English shores.

In the fifty-fourth sonnet,—

“Like as the lute delights or else dislikes
As is his art that plays upon the same,”¹

a musical instrument appears in the sonnets for the first time as an image of love and its moods. The habit persists into Shakspeare's series, with the familiar picture in his hundred and twenty-eighth sonnet, of virginal-playing. It has been customary for scholars to collect such passages as this from Daniel, to prove an Elizabethan's familiarity with the music of his time; and as the lute is most often mentioned, the deduction is made that the instrument was in every one's hands. It may not be out of place, however, to notice that this and similar references to the lute are probably literary, in the same spirit in which sculptors carve Homer always with his lyre. The lute survives even in modern lyrics, perhaps because of its very melodious name, and possibly because our minds refuse to associate the poet's art with a familiar musical instrument, like the piano, for example, or the guitar. The difficulty was as great to the Elizabethans, who could not picture

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

their poets seated at the virginal; the fact that they do imagine them with a lute in their hands, would seem to argue that the lute already was becoming a literary convention, and superseded as a practical instrument. It is a proof of Shakspeare's power to find his image near at hand, that he uses the virginal, instead of the lute; but it is his mistress who plays, not the poet.

In the same year, 1592, appeared Henry Constable's *Diana*,¹ on which, rather than on his sacred sonnets already mentioned, his fame rests. Of the twenty-eight sonnets in this collection, two are devoted to Lady Rich, and in one of them the name is used for a pun, though of course with no such ill intention as Sidney's. This reminder that we are among Astrophel's contemporaries is the only direct evidence of Sidney's influence on Constable. Diana has not the mark of a real woman, nor are even the conventional themes exhausted in her praise. The poet is unsuccessful and gives up his wooing, according to the twenty-sixth sonnet; yet the lady's cruelty is but slightly touched on, and the poet never seems really disturbed by his fate. The passion of Sidney's lyrics so far declines here, that the lover bids his mistress to command him to love in vain; his ill success will then be easy to bear, he says, for all her commands are joy.² The fact is, Constable is simply exercising himself in the latest literary

¹ *Sonnets and other Poems*, Hazlitt, 1859.

² *Ibid.*, p. 6.

form; he has only a lay-figure to sing to, and lacks the dramatic imagination to feign enthusiasm. As literary exercises, his sonnets are admirable, smoother than Daniel's though not so sweet, and more regular in form. He recalls us to the miscellanies by the use of titles, some of which show the old lack of humor, and revive the narrative element; e.g. *To his Ladie's Hand: upon occasion of her Glove, which in her Absence he kissed*.¹ The concluding lines of this sonnet illustrate the general temper of Constable's lyric passion, as well as his very respectable literary skill:—

“The bow that shot these shafts a relique is,
I meane the hand — which is the reason why
So many for devotion thee would kisse:
And I thy glove kisse, as a thing divine —
Thy arrowes quiver, and thy reliques shrine.”

One sonnet, in praise of Diana, suggests a theme which reappeared in other sequences, notably Shakspeare's. It excuses the poet of the charge of flattery, which, he says, would indeed be his crime if he were describing any one but Diana. The idea is not far from —

“Who will believe my verse in time to come,
If it were filled with your most high deserts?”

Constable's quiet book was followed in 1593 by the most elaborate of the purely “literary” sequences, Barnabe Barnes's *Parthenophil and Parthenophe*.² Not only sonnets, but odes, elegies,

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

² Grosart, *Occasional Issues*, i.

madrigals, canzons, and sestinas are used to express the lover's emotion. So far as the subject-matter is concerned there is no discrimination between the forms; an idea introduced in a sonnet may be carried on in a madrigal.¹ The number of literary forms employed shows the bent of Barnes's genius; he is more interested in metrical experiments than in ideas. As a result, his series is extremely hard to read, and none of his sonnets are remembered by any but students of literature. His range of themes is very narrow, and his lyric emotion is slight. He sings the cruelty of his mistress in a few sonnets, notably in the twenty-eighth,² which is one of the few examples of lyric manner: —

“So be my labours endlesse in their turnes,
Turne, turne Parthenophe turne and relent,
Hard is thine harte and never will repent;
See how this heart within my body burns,” etc.

Barnes also has the inevitable description of his lady, but his terms are very conventional; he refers to “golden wyers” for her hair; to pearls set in rubies, when he means her teeth; to diamonds for her eyes, and to ivory for her skin.³ This inventory of ruby, crystal, ivory, pearl, and gold was perfectly familiar to earlier English poets; it is remarkable only that Barnes and his sonnet comrades should return to it in such a barefaced manner after Sidney had set an example of poetic

¹ Sonnet xlii and madr. iv, p. 10.

² No. 48.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

sincerity. It remained for Shakspeare to depart from such trite and far-fetched images.

The first nine sonnets are purely narrative, telling how Parthenophil's heart left Laya, his first love, for Parthenophe. A narrative rather than a lyric tendency is observable throughout the sequence. Besides the two general themes mentioned, Barnes has nothing but rather fantastic ideas, which would link him with the later metaphysical poets, had he any of their enthusiasm. Twice he compares his love to a clock, working out a parallel for all parts of the mechanism¹; and as is usual with such writing, the mind is diverted from the idea to the image. Rather less pleasant are the several poems involving sensuous physical images. What is bearable in Sidney or Spenser only on account of the elevation of mood that accompanies it, is treated by Barnes with the utmost cold-blooded frankness, and seems nothing short of brutal. The sixty-third sonnet² is especially unpleasant when it is remembered that Barnes is describing the woman whom he is supposed to love. How little his interest was in his pretended passion, and how far afield he went for queer ideas, is illustrated by the thirty-second³ and the ten following sonnets, which find their inspiration in the signs of the Zodiac. The eighty-ninth⁴ sonnet is an echo-song, the last syllable of each line being repeated. The

¹ Nos. 18 and 54.

² *Occasional Issues*, i. p. 43.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

lyric impulse is at its lowest, perhaps, in the thirty-first sonnet, in which each line is made up of phrases and their inversions:—

“I burne yet am I cold, I am a cold yet burne,
In pleasing discontent, in discontentment pleased,” etc.¹

The so-called madrigals, odes, and elegies scattered through the series are nothing but irregular rime-forms, and cannot be generalized. The term *madrigal* is evidently used to imply song-quality, since to the Elizabethan mind a madrigal was essentially a musical form. Barnes, however, is unsuccessful in achieving any special melody in this class of his lyrics; they are no more like songs than his sonnets. The sestina, whose only interest is its form, will be considered later.

In this same year, 1593, appeared Thomas Watson's second sequence, the *Tears of Fancie*. Of the original twenty-eight sonnets, eight have been lost. This also is a conventional love-sequence, and the lady counts for as little as did Parthenophe. Watson resembles Barnes further in giving his sonnets a narrative character. The first eight tell how the poet quarrelled with Cupid, and how, after many unsuccessful attempts at revenge, the god finally caught him with his mistress' eyes. With the love-story thus elaborately begun, the sonnets immediately relapse into the inevitable theme of the lady's extreme cruelty, with one brief hint at her beauty.²

¹ *Occasional Issues*, i. p. 20.

² Watson's *Poems*, Arber Reprint, p. 189.

This sequence is too short to be compared with Sidney's or Barnes's. It shows even more technical proficiency than the *Hekatompathia*, but is just as lacking in inspiration and importance. It is a good illustration, however, of the Italian influence upon scholarly minds, appearing here in such small but significant points as the attempt to reproduce the feminine rimes of that literature.

To the same year belongs the elder Giles Fletcher's *Licia*,¹ avowedly a collection of literary exercises. In the preface he says, "This kinde of poetrie wherein I wrote, I did it onlie to trie my humour."² Most of the sonnets are imitated, and the originals have been carefully noted by the editor, Dr. Grosart.³ But the fact that the poet's insincerity is frankly confessed does not lessen the very considerable charm of this sequence. Not only is the verse itself more melodious, if less vigorous, than Sidney's, but the subjects are all drawn from an imaginary world of great beauty. Most of the sonnets are little idyls, after the Alexandrian manner, full of cupids, and describing dainty dramas in which Venus and the poet's mistress play prominent parts. In tone the whole sequence accords with the nineteenth idyl of Theocritus — the story of Love stung by the bee, and laughed at by Aphrodite. An illustrative parallel in Fletcher is the ninth sonnet: —

¹ Grosart, *Occasional Issues*, ii.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

"Love was layd downe, all wearie fast asleepe,
Whereas my love his armour tooke away," etc.¹

The sequence gives the impression of an exquisitely delicate poetic spirit, but of little strength. None of the sonnets show fervor; all of them bespeak a keen delight in intellectual and literary beauty. The element of sensuous physical charm is very small, but the feeling for painting, such as was found in Lodge's *Rosalind*, reappears frequently, with most effect in the sonnet in which Licia is brought face to face with her own portrait.² The only deep note is struck in the sonnet suggestive of Shakspeare, in which the poet meditates how time will destroy all things save beauty, virtue, and friendship:—

"In tyme the strong and stately turrets fall,
In tyme the rose and silver Lillies die,
In tyme the monarchs captives are and thrall,
In tyme the sea and rivers are made drie ;
The hardest flint in tyme doth melt asunder,
Still living fame, in tyme doth fade away,
The mountains proud we see in tyme come under,
And earth for age we see in tyme decay :

* * * * *

Thus all (sweet faire) in tyme must have an end,
Except thy beautie, virtues, and thy friend."³

Like Barnes and the other followers of Sidney, Fletcher supposes his mistress to fall ill, and has a sonnet on her sickness.⁴ This situation seems to have been an admirable one for suggesting queer

¹ *Occasional Issues*, ii. p. 20.

² *Ibid.*, p. 39.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

poetic ideas; here Licia is visited by Death, whom she confounds by her beauty. Another familiar theme is the musical image of love, in this case, like Daniel's sonnet, introducing the lute:—

“Whenas my lute is tuned to her voyce,” etc.¹

In this year also appeared Lodge's *Phyllis*, a collection of sonnets and songs.² How much Lodge owes to the example of the sonneteers just mentioned is not known, for in 1591 he left England with Cavendish for Brazil and did not return until 1593. It is most likely that he wrote his sonnets before he left, and was acquainted with Sidney's *Astrophel*. Not only is this likely from the promptness with which the poems appeared after his return, but in the descriptions of the sea, which they contain, there is no realism whatever, such as might be expected from an observing Elizabethan fresh from a voyage.

Lodge evidently wrote while the pastoral mood was fashionable, for his sequence, more than any other, makes use of Arcadian backgrounds and images. Most of the ideas are expressed figuratively in flowers or plants, as in the sonnet devoted to Phyllis' sickness:—

“How languisheth the primrose of love's garden!” etc.³

The usual love-plaint, describing the hard heart of the lady, uses a similar image of a broken flower:—

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

² *Elizabethan Sonnet-Cycles*, Crow, i.

“ Ah, pale and dying infant of the spring,
How rightly now do I resemble thee ! ”¹

In one lyric the poet describes the physical beauty of his mistress;² in this of course he is following the sonnet convention. He seems more sincere, however, as he is certainly more noble, in the sonnet in which he exalts her spiritual charms;³ some praise the looks of their fair queens, he says, but Phillis excels in eloquence, wisdom, modesty, and faith.

At intervals throughout the collection, and especially toward the end, occur interpolated lyrics. None of them show any particular importance in external form, for though Lodge has often the effect of variety, he rarely attempts innovations. Some of his lyrics he calls “odes”; others he calls “songs.” There is no distinction, however, between the two classes. Of the odes, the best is, “Now I find thy looks were feigned.”⁴ Of the songs, the best known are probably “My Phillis hath the morning sun,”⁵ and “Love gilds the roses of thy lips.”⁶

Phillis differs from the other sequences in being evidently completed by the poet; there is no such unfinished feeling as is got from the *Astrophel*. Lodge’s concluding sonnet is significant in that it commends the series not only to the lady but also

¹ *Elizabethan Sonnet-Cycles*, i. p. 18.

² *Ibid.*, p. 52.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

to the reader; the poet evidently drops his lover's mask.

Michael Drayton's *Idea*, 1594,¹ needs little comment either for form or for substance. Whatever his merits may be in other forms of poetry, Drayton here reveals a scholastic mind without much evidence of lyric power. Conjecture has found a real woman for the subject of these sonnets, but there is no supporting evidence, and the theory weakens with every reading of the sequence. After a few sonnets dealing directly with the love-story through the conventional themes of the awakening of passion and the lady's hard-heartedness, the poet turns for inspiration to such subjects as the *Soul*,² and the *Celestial Numbers*.³ These are indeed connected with the main theme of love, but the interest of the poet and of the reader is felt to lie chiefly in the academic conceit.

How far Drayton is removed from the normal inspiration of love-poetry is shown by the two sonnets in which, under the titles of *Lunacy*⁴ and *Folly*,⁵ he studies his passion as a type of mental disease:—

“ With fools and children good discretion beares,
Then honest people beare with love and me.”

The lady, from all appearances, is forgotten — if indeed Drayton ever thought of one.

¹ *Poems*, Oliver Elton, *The Spencer Society*, 1888, pt. II.

² *Ibid.*, p. 382.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 381.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 386.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 388.

In the same year appeared William Percy's *Cœlia*.¹ This slight sequence of twenty sonnets shows even more than Drayton's what unlyrical material was dragged into the vortex of the sonnet fashion. Percy was an intimate friend of Barnabe Barnes, and perhaps from admiration of *Parthenophil*, which he mentions in a so-called madrigal,² he was led to compose a sequence of his own. The now familiar themes are copied laboriously. When Percy meets Cœlia, Cupid wounds him at once. Cœlia, of course, fails to reciprocate, so that her lover reproaches her for cruelty. These remonstrances show an amusing preponderance of common sense over poetry, as in the lines:—

“Dearest cruell the cause I see dislikes thee,
On us thy brows thou bende so direfully;
Enjoine me penunance whatsoever likes thee,
Whate're it be Ile take it thankfully.
Yet since for love it is I am thy bondman,
Good Cœlia use me like a Gentleman.”³

The uncertain prosody of this quotation, especially the riming of the last two lines, is typical of Percy's art in general; he profits by none of the advances made since Wyatt's time.

Among his incidental or decorative themes, Percy introduces the usual musical image in an address to his lute:—

“Strike up, my lute, and ease my heavie cares.”⁴

¹ Grosart, *Occasional Issues*, iv.

² *Ibid.*, p. 25.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

An old technical trick is repeated in the "echo" sonnet.¹ Instead of the more usual linking of his love's beauty with Venus, through the fable that Cupid mistook the lady for his mother, Percy likens Cœlia to Polyxena, and on the theory of the reincarnation of souls, defends his position stoutly.² In the interpolation of realistic incidents he is not so happy; a good illustration is his account of how his lady accidentally stepped on his foot.³

In 1594 also appeared the anonymous series *Zepheria*,⁴ composed of forty English sonnets, more or less regular, called *canzone*. The author of this sequence seems to have been a diligent reader of French poetry; many passages in their language also suggest Chaucer, *e.g.*:—

"When from the tower whence I derive love's heaven,
Mine eyes (quick pursuivants!) the sight attached
Of thee, all splendent! I, as out of sweaven,
Myself 'gan rouse, like one from sleep awaked."⁵

The author of these poems, like Percy, follows the uncertain prosody of Wyatt's time. In feminine rimes, for example, he evidently thinks it sufficient that the last syllables should correspond, as in the quotation, "attachéd," "awakéd." He returns to the earlier poetry in a deeper sense, however, by reviving the mood of the old miscellany love-plaints. The sonnets generally inter-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴ Arber's *English Garner*, v. p. 65 sq.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

est us in the isolated moods of the lover rather than in the lady or in the progression of the story. Beyond the general theme of the hard-heartedness of his mistress, the poet does not characterize her at all. The series is of no importance either in spirit or in form. It is chiefly remembered because its frequent use of legal terms¹ was parodied by Sir John Davies, whom we shall consider later.

In January, 1595, Richard Barnfield published his twenty sonnets to Ganymede.² This sequence is mainly remarkable for its subject—that passionate friendship of one man for another which is the first motive in Shakspeare's series. In treating this subject Barnfield has but two lyrical themes,—Ganymede's beauty and the poet's love. There is no narrative or dramatic element in the sequence. Ganymede's beauty is expressed by mythological comparisons:—

“Cherry-lipt Adonis in his snowie shape,
Might not compare with his pure Ivorie white.”³

The poet's love for his friend is put in equally literary terms, drawn from classical thought:—

“The Stoics thinke (and they come neare the truth,)
That virtue is the chieffest good of all.
* * * * *
My chieffest good, my chiefe felicity,
Is to be gazing on my love's faire eie.”⁴

It is suspected that Barnfield imitates Shakspeare, or that Shakspeare imitates him. Certainly, be-

¹ Cf. Nos. ii, v, vi, xiii, xx, etc.

³ No. 17.

² *Poems*, Grosart, *The Roxburghe Club*, 1876.

⁴ No. 3.

sides the common use of the theme of friendship, there is a resemblance between them in the smoothness and sweetness of their verses.

II

Next to Shakspeare's and Sidney's, the sonnet-sequence that would attract most attention by the name of its author is Spenser's, published in 1595, under the title *Amoretti*.¹ From a poet of his rank we should expect all that the form was capable of; and from Spenser, in particular, the scholarly poet, we should look for a combination of the good points of preceding sequences. To make a general criticism in advance, we should say that the individual sonnets have not the merit of the series as a whole. None of them stand out boldly, as do many of Sidney's and Shakspeare's. A partial explanation may lie in the rime-scheme, which is attributed elsewhere to the example of Clement Marot.² This has neither the rise and fall of the Petrarchan strophe, nor the graduated climax of the English quatrains; the ear becomes dull with mere smoothness.

But taking the sonnets as a whole, the critic must find in them the truest sequence of this decade. There is a progression in the story and in the poet's moods, from the beginning to the end, and each sonnet has its inevitable place. The series is really but one poem in which each sonnet

¹ *Works*, R. Morris, p. 572 sq. ² See below, Chap. ix. p. 294.

is a stanza, and each stanza, as in the *Epithalamium*, a lyric unit. The form was in accord with Spenser's idyllic genius.

The series or single poem, if it be considered such, is divided with apparent forethought into two parts, of sixty-one and twenty-two sonnets respectively. The first section deals with the unsuccessful wooing of the poet; in the second the lady accepts him, and the days of their betrothal are described. The poet skilfully indicates the length of time which is supposed to elapse. The series begins in the early spring, as is seen from the fourth sonnet:—

“New Yeaere, forth looking out of Janus gate,
Doth seeme to promise hope of new delight.”¹

In the sixty-second sonnet, the turning-point in the love story, another new year is announced, so that the period of the poet's unrequited love is one year. As the *Epithalamium*, which is supposed to end the series, pictures midsummer as the time of the wedding, the time of the second part of the sonnets would appear to be about six months. As a matter of fact, it was one year, for Spenser was married June 11, 1594, a year after the lady accepted him.²

The first part of the sequence, then, would naturally deal with more sombre, more troubled moods than the second. In the first year the poet notices the Lenten season as it comes round:—

¹ *Spenser's Works*, p. 573. ² Cf. Introduction, *ibid.*, p. xi.

"This holy season, fit to fast and pray,
Men to devotion ought to be inclynd:
Therefore, I lykewise, on so holy day,
For my sweet Saynt some service fit will find." ¹

In the second year, however, it is Easter-day that accords with his happier mood:—

"Most glorious Lord of lyfe ! that, on this day,
Didst make thy triumph over death and sin." ²

The same difference in mood, exquisitely matched with the change in the lover's fortunes, appears in the two sonnets on spring. In the first part, the nineteenth sonnet ³ warns all lovers to "wayt upon their king"—the old motive of spring in love-poetry. In the second part the seventieth sonnet, ⁴ bidding the betrothed to hasten the wedding-day, uses the Renaissance argument of the shortness of life and the brief springtime of beauty:—

"Make hast, therefore, sweet love, whilst it is prime;
For none can call againe the passed time."

The most unexpected opposition between the two parts of the series is in the description of the lady's beauty. Spenser selects one detail as significant of each phase of his love-experience. During his period of doubt, his mistress' eyes are constantly described in various aspects; sometimes as almost baleful beauty, as in the seventh sonnet, ⁵ or as beneficent, as in the eighth, ⁶ or as indices of her changing moods, as in the twelfth. ⁷ In the second

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 576.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 583.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 574.

² *Ibid.*, p. 583.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 573.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 574.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 575.

part of the sequence, the poet dwells upon his lady's smile, which is indeed mentioned in the earlier section, but which receives its most notable expression in the eighty-first sonnet.¹

“Fayre is my love, when her fayre golden heares
With the loose wynd ye waving chance to marke ;
Fayre, when the rose in her red cheekes appears ;
Or in her eyes the fyre of love does sparke.
Fayre, when her brest, lyke a rich laden barke,
With pretious merchandize she forth doth lay ;
Fayre, when that cloud of pryde, which oft doth dark
Her goodly light, with smiles she drives away.
But fayrest she, when so she doth display
The gate with pearles and rubies richly dight ;
Throgh which her words so wise do make their way
To beare the message of her gentle spright.
The rest be works of natures wonderment :
But this the worke of harts astonishment.”

In the general description of beauty, Spenser's Platonic bent naturally marks off his sequence from the others. Though as a child of the Renaissance, he is keenly sensible of physical charm, yet he places the emphasis on beauty of soul. The two worlds, spiritual and physical, derived in a literary sense from Plato on the one hand and from Italy on the other, are to him not antithetical but complementary. The illustrative sonnet is the fifteenth,² in which the lady's eyes, lips, hands, and hair are described in superlative terms, with the final lines:—

“But that which fayrest is, but few behold,
Her mind adorn'd with vertues manifold.”

¹ Spenser's *Works*, p. 585.

² *Ibid.*, p. 575.

It is typical also of Spenser that instead of likening his mistress to a goddess, as had been the honored custom of sonneteers, he refers to her always as his saint; the very term indicates the spiritual rather than physical excellence that he admires.

It is in keeping with this point of view that he describes his meeting with his mistress in terms of almost mystical devotion. When he sees her, according to the third sonnet,¹ instead of feeling at once the barbed dart of Cupid,—the fate of the other sonneteers,—he is first struck dumb and blind by her beauty. It is not the immediate power of love that overcomes him, as it would be in Dante's case, but the unexpected vision of incarnate virtue. This humility the poet retains throughout. It takes final expression toward the end of the series in the more conventional sixty-sixth sonnet:²—

“To all those happy blessings, which ye have
With plenteous hand by heaven upon you thrown;
This one disparagement they to you gave,
That ye your love lent to so meane a one.”

The Platonic and Italian strains in Spenser's nature find interesting expression in the seventy-second sonnet, on the conflict of spiritual and sensual desires. This theme enters into all sonnet-series more or less; perhaps it has a natural place in any philosophy of human love. Only Sidney, Spenser, and Shakspeare, however, have presented the conflict

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 573.

² *Ibid.*, p. 582.

in their sonnets with distinction. With Sidney the problem was a specific one, and entered unavoidably into his story; the dramatic element in his sonnets comes, as has been seen, from the conflict of his sinful love with Stella, the embodiment of his nobler ideals. With Shakspeare throughout and notably in the strong hundred and twenty-ninth sonnet, the poet's nature seems in revolt against the ugliness of sinful desires. Spenser, however, is unconscious of sin in the problem; he expresses simply the conflict between desires of the heart and of the soul, both pure in themselves—Hellenism and Hebraism, in Arnold's phrase. Whatever advantage the other two poets may have in the strength of their treatment of the problem, Spenser certainly has expressed it for the normal reader:—

“ Oft, when my spirit doth spread her bolder winges,
In mind to mount up to the purest sky;
It down is weighd with thought of earthly things,
And clogd with burden of mortality;
Where, when that soverayne beauty it doth spy,
Resembling heavens glory in her light,
Drawne with sweet pleasures bayt, it back doth fly
And unto heaven forgets her former flight.”¹

In this year, 1595, appeared Barnes's *Divine Centurie of Spiritual Sonnets*. It is usual to connect this and other collections of sacred lyrics in the sonnet-form, with similar sequences written a few years earlier in France. Barnes's sonnets are said to be imitations of the *Sonnets Spirituels*, published

¹ Spenser's *Works*, p. 583.

in 1573 and in 1575 by the Abbé Jacques de Billy. But whatever the ultimate source of the sequence, it represents, like Constable's *Spiritual Sonnets*, a real or pretended reaction against the love-sonnet convention. Barnes exhorts his muse in the first poem to leave singing of earthly passion and mount to heavenly themes. The series adds no new facts of interest, and has never counted for much in Barnes's reputation.

Emaricdulfe, a sequence of forty sonnets by "E. C., Esq.," appeared in 1595.¹ It embraces few of the conventional themes. Most of the sonnets are in praise of the lady's beauty. They are bound together by no narrative vein, and, strangely enough, the lady is not reproached for hard-heartedness. This latter omission, however, is explained by the author's dedication, in which he confesses the whole series to be a literary pastime.

The theme mentioned last in the criticism of Spenser is here treated in the thirty-second sonnet, in which the poet, with something of Shakspeare's vehemence (perhaps in imitation), rails against impure love. The theme may be used as a touchstone, whereby the poorness of E. C.'s art and taste is made painfully clear.

In this same year appeared Sir John Davies' *Gulling Sonnets*, nine quatorzains in ridicule of the more affected styles of popular sonneteers.² The

¹ *A Lamport Garland*, Chas. Edmonds, *The Roxburghe Club*, 1881.

² *Complete Poems*, A. B. Grosart, ii, p. 51 sq.

eighth sonnet has been identified as a parody of the affectation of legal knowledge in *Zepheria*, but the others are easily recognized, at least in the spirit of their parody. The method of all of them is to develop a trite theme laboriously through twelve lines, and then in the concluding couplet, where normally the climax should be, to descend deliberately into bathos. A good illustration is the ninth:—

“To Love my God I doe knightes service owe
And therefore now he hath my witt in warde,
But while it is in his tuition soe,
Methinks he doth intreat it passinge hard ;
For thoughe he hathe it married longe agoe
To Vanytie, a wenche of no regarde,
And now to full and perfect age doth growe,
Yet nowe of freedome it is most debarde.
But why should love after minoritye
When I am past my one and twentieth yeare
Perclude my witt of his sweet libertye,
And make it still the yoake of wardshippe beare.
I feare he hath an other title gott
And holds my witt now for an Ideott.”¹

In 1596 appeared Richard Linche's *Diella*, a series of thirty-nine English sonnets.² Only a word of comment is needed. The sequence is thoroughly conventional, but fairly well done. There is an interesting return to a theme of the first miscellanies, in the tenth sonnet, where the poet tells how with the springtime all things revive save the

¹ *Complete Poems*, ii. p. 62.

² Grosart's *Occasional Issues*, iv.

grieving heart of the lover.¹ The musical instrument reappears in the sixteenth sonnet:—

“But thou my dear sweet-sounding lute be still.”²

A theme which becomes more important, as the sonnet fashion draws near its climax in Shakspeare, is what might be called the night-thoughts of the lover. As expressed here in the nineteenth sonnet, it is a mood of disappointment, which comes on the lover when he wakes from dreaming of his lady.³ Among the descriptions of Diella's beauty should be noticed the usual comparison to a classic goddess;⁴ here the compliment is framed into an episode, in which Cupid falls in love with her, and Venus is jealous lest she should win the affection of Mars.

At times the conventionality of the sequence is interrupted by an odd allusion or a queer trick of style. A good example of the first is the reference to the American Indian in the eighth sonnet:—

“Thyne eyes (those semynaries of my grieve)
Have been more gladsome to my tyre'd spright,
Than naked savages receive relieve
By comfort-bringing warmth of Phœbus' light.”⁵

A conscious and very old method, by which a small idea is stretched out to cover the fourteen lines, is the antithetical use of images, as in the fourteenth sonnet.⁶ When rivers run uphill, and sheep devour

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

² *Ibid.*, p. 26.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

wolves, and fish climb mountains, and bears swim, then the poet will cease to love. But rivers cannot run uphill, nor sheep devour wolves, nor fish come on land, nor bears swim; therefore the poet will not cease to love.

Of a finer inspiration is the sonnet in which Time is bidden to turn back and consider how beautiful Diella is.¹ The Renaissance note of sadness is absent from this contemplation of swift-passing beauty, but the images are exactly those which Shakspeare uses for the same theme, and the effect somewhat recalls his fine apostrophe.

In the same year appeared Bartholomew Griffin's *Fidessa*, a sequence of sixty-two English sonnets.² The technic of these sonnets is excellent, but the subject-matter is echoed from previous series. The most flagrant plagiarism is the sonnet on sleep, in which the phrases of Daniel's fine poem are simply rearranged.³

Griffin's ability for attaining verbal effects without any particular sense in the words is illustrated by the opening lines of the sonnet describing his lady: —

“ Fair is my love that feeds among the lilies,
The lilies growing in that pleasant garden
Where Cupid's Mount, that well-beloved hill is,
And where that little god, himself is Warden.
See where my Love sits in the beds of spices !
Beset all round with camphor, myrrh and roses,

¹ *Occasional Issues*, iv. p. 9.

² *Arber's English Garner*, v. p. 589 sq.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 598.

And interlaced with curious devices
Which her from all the world apart incloses."¹

Griffin's only contributions to technical form are two sonnets in which every line ends in the same word. To the conventional music-theme, however, he adds a new point of view, bringing it nearer to Shakspeare. He introduces the lute, in the seventeenth sonnet,² but the lady plays it:—

"The lute itself is sweetest when she plays."

The instrument ceases to be the badge of the poet's art, and becomes a detail in a realistic picture.

To this same year belongs *Chloris*, a collection of forty-eight sonnets by William Smith.³ This sequence is very plainly an imitation of contemporary sonnets, written from an honest ambition to be in the fashion. In the third sonnet⁴ and in the epilogue,⁵ the poet makes his frank apologies to the other sonneteers for not following them with a surer foot. The two opening sonnets⁶ and the last,⁷ all in praise of Spenser, are more spirited, and at least they do credit to Smith's critical judgment.

The series is pastoral in tone. The thirteenth sonnet tells an incident from Tasso's *Aminta* and the fourteenth refers to that poem and to that poet

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 609.

² *Ibid.*, p. 599.

³ Grosart's *Occasional Issues*, iv.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

by name; no doubt the influence extended over the rest of the sequence. The fauns and the syl-vans are called upon to plead with the obdurate Chloris; even the pine-trees, under whose shade she rests, are bidden help persuade her. This is the most decided expression of Chloris' cruelty; for the most part the poet is very humble, and seems to ascribe to his own unworthiness his small success in love.

The only technical experiment is a revival of the old echo song in the form of sonnet, in which the echoes, read together, constitute a new poem:—

“O fairest faire to thee I make *my plaint*,
 To thee from whom my cause of grief *doth spring*
 Attentive be unto the grones *sweete Saint*
 Which unto thee in doleful tunes *I sing*.
 My mournful muse doth alwaies speak *of thee*,
 My love is pure O do it not *disdain*,
 With bitter sorrow still oppress *not me*
 But mildly looke upon me *which complaine*.
 Kill not my true-affecting thoughts, *but give*
 Such pretious balm of comfort to *my heart*,
 But casting off despaire in *hope to live*,
 I may find helpe at length to *ease my smart*.
 So shall you adde such courage to *my love*,
 That fortune false my faith *shall not remove*.”¹

In 1598 appeared Robert Tofte's *Alba*,² a series of love songs, in form like Watson's *Hekatompathia*, but with four quatrains instead of three. The year before, the same poet published a similar

¹ *Occasional Issues*, iv. p. 12.

² *Occasional Issues*, xii.

series entitled *Laura*. So slight is the merit of both performances, that *Alba* is considered more important on account of a reference to *Love's Labour's Lost*.¹

In the same year a set of fifteen elegiac sonnets was published by Thomas Rogers on the death of Lady Frances, Countess of Hertford.² They show the influence of the sonnet-publishing fashion on conventional subject-matter; ten years before it would have taken the form of epitaphs such as are found in the miscellanies.

Perhaps in this record of the sonnet-sequences should be included Sir John Davies' *Astræa*, 1599. This is a series of twenty-six acrostics in honor of the Queen. The initial letters of each song form the motto "Elisabetha Regina." In this artificial form the poet attains great freedom and grace, and the subjects are fresher, more English, and more song-like than in most of the sonnet-series. Perhaps because of the dainty stanza and the lightly turned compliment, these lyrics often have the quality of society verse. A good example is the sixth, *To the Nightingale*:—

" Every night from even till morn,
Love's chorister amid the thorn,
Is now so sweete a singer !
So sweet, as for her song, I scorn
Apollo's voice and finger.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

² Included in the *Lampart Garland*, Chas. Edmonds, *The Rozburghe Club*, 1881.

But, Nightingale ! sith you delight
Ever to watch the starry night,
Tell all the stars of heaven !
Heaven never had a star so bright
As now to earth is given !
Royal Astræa makes our day
Eternal, with her beams ! nor may
Gross darkness overcome her !
I now perceive why some do write,
'No country hath so short a night
As England hath in summer.'"¹

The sonnet vogue, however, was nearing its end. The last two sequences were not published until the beginning of the next century, although they were probably written in this decade. Sir William Alexander's *Aurora*,² a series of a hundred and six sonnets, not to mention madrigals, so called, sestinas, elegies, and songs, was published in 1604. The sonnets, which followed the Petrarchan model, were devoted to strictly conventional subjects. In the other lyrics, however, the author recalls Barnes by his continual experiments in external verse-form. In all the elegies which are merely love-plaints, the "poulter's measure" is revived — possibly because the poet thought it resembled the classical elegiac meter. The madrigals are irregular lyrics, not at all resembling the Italian form of that name. In the fourth song all the stanzas, which are seven lines long, rime together on the same words.³ This is a variation of the sestina, without the progressive

¹ Arber's *English Garner*, v. p. 566.

² *Poetical Works*, 3 vols., Glasgow, 1870. ³ *Ibid.*, i. p. 42.

change in the order of the rimes. A still more interesting experiment is the fifth song,¹ in which all the rimes are perfect; that is, they have the same form and sound, with a different meaning. The first stanza will be sufficient for illustration:—

“Alongst the borders of a pleasant plaine,
The sad Alexis did his garments teare,
And though alone, yet fearing to be plaine,
Did maime his words with many a sigh and teare :
For whilst he leaned him downe upon a grene,
His wounds began againe for to grow grene.”

The last and greatest sonnet-sequence of this period, Shakspeare's *Sonnets*, was published surreptitiously in 1609.² It has been thought, however, that most of the series was composed before 1594, and was known to many readers in manuscript.³ The great interest in these sonnets has usually centred in the striking narrative of friendship and love that forms the structure of the series. The poet begins with singing the praises of his friend, a young man; then a woman appears by whom both are fascinated, and the young friend apparently defeats the poet in the contest for the lady's favor. On this framework it was long customary to build an elaborate study of Shakspeare's misfortunes in love. It is now the fashion to hold rather that Shakspeare, like the other sonneteers, was merely

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

² *Works*, Cambridge edition, Wm. Aldis Wright, 1893, ix. p. 281 *sq.*

³ Sidney Lee, *Life of Shakspeare*, pp. 88, 89.

using conventional subject-matter in a conventional way.¹ However that may be, the passionate friendship of man for man, as intense in its expression as love of a woman, was not rare in Elizabethan literature, and had already been celebrated in the sonnet-form by Barnfield. The love of a woman who was bound to some one else was of course the chief motive of *Astrophel*. Shakspeare may have seen the dramatic effect of combining the two themes. As the sonnets stand, however, the themes are slightly mixed; we can only guess in what order the poet would have arranged them had they been printed under his care. But whatever their order, for the purposes of this study it is sufficient to notice how they include all the best themes of preceding sonnets, and how those themes are modified by the great poet's genius.

The first twenty-six sonnets, devoted to the poet's friend, have three main themes — advice to the youth to marry, the "eternizing" theme, and praise of the friend's beauty. The advice to marry takes the place of the reproach of hard-heartedness in the earlier series. The "eternizing" theme, the promise to make his friend immortal in verse, was also familiar to Shakspeare from its use by his contemporaries, but his statement of it is by far the most powerful and most persistent of the period. It is hard not to believe that this conventional theme has found a sincere echo in the heart of an

¹ *Life of Shakspeare*, p. 109 sq.

ambitious man. The third theme is presented in the plea that should the poet faithfully portray his friend, no one would believe the picture — a formula of compliment that we have already met with. The three themes are stated together in the seventeenth sonnet: —

“If I could write the beauty of your eyes,
And in fresh numbers number all your graces,
The age to come would say, ‘This poet lies;
Such heavenly touches ne’er touched earthly faces.’
So should my papers, yellowed with their age,
Be scorned, like old men of less truth than tongue,
And your true rights be termed a poet’s rage
And stretched meter of an antique song:
But were some child of yours alive that time,
You should live twice, in it and in my rhyme.”¹

In this first part of the series, especially in the admonition of his friend to marry, Shakspeare uses the Renaissance plea of the flight of time and the shortness of beauty’s spring. But it is characteristic of these sonnets that the emphasis is always upon the approaching decay, rather than upon the departing bloom. The images are drawn from autumn and winter, not from spring: —

“When I do count the clock that tells the time,
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;
When I behold the violet past prime,
* * * * *
Then of thy beauty do I question make,
That thou among the wastes of time must go,” etc.²

On the other hand, in describing the beauty of

¹ *Works*, ix. p. 290.

² *Ibid.*, p. 287.

his friend, Shakspeare adds much to the usual sonneteer's conception by making beauty the evolution of an ideal—the dream of past ages come true:—

“Thus all their praises are but prophesies,
Of this our time, all you prefiguring.”¹

This is quite different from the usual comparison with Helen or Venus, or other beauties of the old world, though Shakspeare has also an example of that.²

In addition to these descriptions of his friend, Shakspeare has, in the latter part of the sequence, a description of the woman, which, on account of its dominant color, has made its subject famous in literary tradition as the “Dark Lady.”³ This description, which seems at first sight a realist's revolt against the formulas of golden hair, red lips, and lily hands, coincides with a conventional portrait, familiar to the Elizabethans from Sidney's picture of the dark-eyed Stella. It is as old in lyric poetry as the song of Theocritus: “They all call thee a gypsy, gracious Bombyca, and lean, and sunburnt; 'tis only I that call thee honey-pale. Yea, and the violet is swart, and swart the lettered hyacinth, but yet these flowers are chosen the first in garlands.”⁴

Somewhat akin to the gloomy tone of the description of beauty, mentioned above, is the sixty-ninth sonnet, in strong contrast with Spenser's descrip-

¹ *Works*, ix. p. 343. ² No. liii, p. 311. ³ No. cxxvii, p. 355.

⁴ *Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus*, Andrew Lang, p. 57.

tion of his mistress' soul. Referring to the evil life which has soiled his friend's reputation, the poet tells how the world allows physical beauty to the youth, but judges his soul by his actions and finds it base: —

“They look into the beauty of thy mind,
And that, in guess, they measure by thy deeds;
Then, churls, their thoughts, although their eyes were kind,
To thy fair flower add the rank smell of weeds.”¹

It is hard to say how much Shakspeare gained from Spenser, but there are many points of similarity, such as the sonnet of the “two loves, of comfort and despair.”² This is but a different poetic statement of Spenser's sonnet, mentioned before,³ on the conflict of earthly and spiritual love.

The familiar music-image of the earlier sonnets is here represented by the sonnet on his lady playing the virginal.⁴ What was before a literary convention, Shakspeare makes a realistic picture. Those critics who argue from such passages as this that the poet had any specific musical knowledge, quite overlook the fact that all he needed to find such an image was observation. The picture is natural, as is that earlier one of his friend listening to music: —

“Music to hear, why hearest thou music sadly?”⁵

Among the minor points of similarity with preceding sonneteers, should be mentioned the punning

¹ *Works*, ix. p. 321. ² *Ibid.*, p. 144. ³ See above, p. 158.

⁴ *Works*, p. 128.

⁵ No. viii, p. 285.

sonnets on the name "Will,"¹ and the occasional use of legal terms.² The punning sonnets, as we have seen, were the fashion of the age, continuations of the custom set by Sidney. The use of legal terms had been widely practised, especially in *Zepheria*, and had been parodied by Davies.

The familiar theme of the absent mistress present in the dreams of the lover reaches probably its most important expression in the forty-third sonnet:—

"When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see."³

Though here it is the conventional theme, yet there is a suggestion also of the older idea, made prominent by Chaucer, that the true lover had his love's image in his heart, and could visualize it with his eyes closed.

A remarkable sonnet is the ninety-ninth, which has fifteen lines. The first line—

"The forward violet thus did I chide."⁴

is not an organic part of the sonnet, but is absolutely necessary to the understanding of the image employed. It contains the lyric impulse. In this respect it resembles the narrative titles of many love-plaints in the miscellanies, which serve the same purpose of introducing the lyric stimulus.

This is enough to show Shakspeare's general relation to the earlier sonnet-series. The originality of his genius appears in the treatment of the ele-

¹ Nos. cxxxv and cxxxvi, p. 360.

³ *Works*, p. 306.

² No. cxxxiv, p. 359.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 338.

mental passions of life, such as friendship and love. These themes he considers for their own sake, sometimes not even caring to relate them closely to the series. Perhaps because they are motives of the broadest human significance, they are the best known. The typical sonnet on friendship is the twenty-ninth:—

“ When in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes.”¹

The lark image in the last quatrain, so closely associated with Shakspeare’s lyric mood, here adds a new theme to the sonnet tradition. The typical sonnet of love is the hundred and sixteenth. As a praise of abstract love its only rival in Elizabethan song is Spenser’s Platonic hymn; but in vigor of expression and in lyric force, the sonnet stands alone:—

“ Love’s not Time’s fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle’s compass come,
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error, and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.”²

In the treatment of his themes Shakspeare shows two interesting habits. The first is the use of very simple and realistic images to express conventional and usually ornate ideas. It is as if the dramatist carried over into sonneteering the homely devices and matter-of-fact formulas of the stage. Such a use is illustrated by the thirty-fourth sonnet:—

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

² *Ibid.*, p. 348.

"Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day,
And make me travel forth without my cloak,
To let base clouds o'ertake me in my way?"¹

or by the seventy-third:—

"That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold."²

The second of Shakspeare's habits is his constant experimenting with one theme. After once stating his idea, he frequently recasts it in one or more following sonnets. This has been noticed in earlier sonneteers, but with Shakspeare the trick is very barefaced. It is one of the best reasons adduced for thinking that the whole series is more or less a literary exercise.

The one quality which marks this sequence as the culmination of the sonnet period is the perfection of lyric form in the case of half a dozen sonnets. In the whole period there are hardly a score that have perfect unity, and Shakspeare achieved it more often than any other sonneteer. A good example of such lyric form is the hundred and fourth sonnet.³ The stimulus, which is an idea rather than an image, is presented in the first line:—

"To me, fair friend, you never can be old."

In the next seven lines this motive is developed by giving the reasons for the poet's confidence. The images used, all drawn from the decay of nature,

¹ No. cxxxiv, p. 300.

² *Ibid.*, p. 323.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 341.

suggest almost unconsciously that the eternal beauty of the "fair friend" must be an exception:—

"For as you were when first your eye I eyed,
Such seems your beauty still. Three winters cold
Have from the forests shook three summers' pride,
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turned
In process of the seasons have I seen,
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burned,
Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green."

In the sextet, Shakspeare keeps the English form, but adopts the cadence of the Petrarchan sonnet. This cadence permits the proper lyric development; the suggestion of Nature's decay makes the poet fear lest his affection has deceived him; perhaps his friend's beauty is changing. The mood of confidence changes gradually to one of regret, and so ends:—

"Ah, yet doth beauty, like a dial-hand,
Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived;
So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,
Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceived:
For fear of which, hear this, thou age unbred;
Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead."

CHAPTER VI

OTHER LYRISTS OF THE SONNET PERIOD

THE lyric poetry of the last decade of the sixteenth century was dominated by Sidney and Spenser. Sidney's influence was upon the sonnet-sequences, as has been noticed; Spenser's was upon the lyric in other forms, published separately. In 1591 appeared his *Daphnaida*,¹ an elegy on the death of Douglas Howard, daughter of Henry, Lord Howard. This poem continues the pastoral tradition in so far as it is an eclogue, in which the dirge proper is introduced. The dirge is in seven sections, each of seven stanzas seven lines long. The last line of each section is a refrain:—

“Weepe, Shepheard ! weepe, to make my undersong.”

The dirge is not a strict elegy according to the Greek model, such as the elegy in the *Shepherds Calender*. The order of the themes is apparently haphazard, and there is no note of consolation whatever. Several of the typical elegiac motives are present, however, as in the first section, where the protest against untimely death is stated thus:—

¹ *Works*, p. 542 sq.

"She fell away in her first ages spring,
Whilst yet her leafe was greene, and fresh her rinde,
And whilst her braunch faire blossomes foorth did bring,
She fell away against all course of kinde.
For age to dye is right, but youth is wrong;
She fell away like fruit blowne downe with winde.
Weepe, Shepheard ! weepe, to make my undersong."¹

The quotation illustrates the stanza employed throughout the poem—a variation of the rime royal. Perhaps Spenser wished to avoid the epigrammatic final couplet of Chaucer's stanza.

The only other theme that is distinctly reminiscent of the Greek model is the complaint that the good are taken and the less worthy spared. As Spenser here states it, however, it is rather a fatalistic doctrine than a complaint:—

"The good and righteous he away doth take,
To plague th' unrighteous which alive remaine;
But the ungodly ones he doth forsake,
By living long to multiplie their paine."²

In the same year Spenser's *Complaints*³ were published. The first of these poems, the *Ruines of Time*, is an elegy on Sidney. The elegy proper is framed in an allegory, but its quality is lyrical. The grief expressed is at first general; the poet mourns the passing of greatness from the earth. Then Sidney, the type of spiritual greatness, is mourned in a tone of sincere personal sorrow. The consolation, the third division of the Greek elegy, is here found in the contemplation of Sidney's

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 545.

² *Ibid.*, p. 546.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 487 sq.

spirit in eternal bliss, and more especially, in the immortality which song will bring him. Spenser takes the opportunity of paying an exalted tribute to the "eternizing" power of poetry:—

"Provide therefore (ye Princes) whilst ye live,
That of the Muses ye may friended bee,
Which unto men eternitie do give;
For they be daughters of Dame Memorie
And Jove, the father of eternitie,
And do those men in golden thrones repose,
Whose merits they to glorify do chose.

The sevenfold yron gate of grislie Hell,
And horrid house of sad Proserpina,
They able are with power of mightie spell
To breake, and thence the soules to bring awaie
Out of dread darknesse to eternall day,
And them immortall make, which els would die
In foule forgetfulnesse, and nameles lie."¹

The other lyrical poems in the volume were the *Teares of the Muses*, Bellay's *Ruines of Rome* translated, the *Visions of the Worlds Vanitie*, the *Visions of Bellay*, and the *Visions of Petrarch*. The first is a long poem on the decay of learning and art. Spenser would seem here to be quite unconscious of the great poetic age already dawning. Each of the Muses is introduced in turn and makes her complaint of neglect. Though Spenser attains a certain dignity of utterance in these speeches, lyrical emotion is in a large measure absent from them, and they have little lyric devel-

¹ *Works*, p. 493.

opment. Perhaps the cause is the preponderance of thought and philosophy in the subject; as in his Platonic hymns, Spenser's lyric gifts are hidden by the exposition of doctrine. In one or two passages, however, this exposition almost attains the exalted mood of song, as in these words of Urania:—

“Through knowledge we behold the worlds creation,
How in his cradle first he fostred was;
And judge of Natures cunning operation,
How things she formed of a formelesse mas:
By knowledge wee do learne ourselves to knowe
And what to man, and what to God, wee owe.

From hence wee mount aloft unto the skie,
And looke into the Christall firmament:
There we behold the heavens great Hierarchie,
The Starres pure light, the Spheres swift movément,
The Spirits and Intelligences fayre,
And Angels waighting on th' Almightyes chayre.

And there, with humble minde and high insight,
Th' Eternall Maker's majestie wee viewe,
His love, his truth, his glorie, and his might,
And mercie more than mortall man can vew.
O soveraigne Lord! O soveraigne happinesse,
To see thee, and thy mercie measurelesse!”¹

The translations of Bellay's *Ruines of Rome*, like the remaining lyrical poems in the volume, are devoted to the contemplation of the transitoriness of human greatness. The poem is a succession of English sonnets, related only by the theme common to all—the praise of Rome in its power, and the picture of it in decay. The twenty-third sonnet

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 502.

introduces a moral note by laying the blame of Rome's fall on luxurious living. The next sonnet continues this mood by asking what old sin was it that needed such atoning in the city's perpetual wars. The series ends with an envoy, a compliment to Bellay's art:—

“Needes must he all eternitie survive,
That can to other give eternall dayes.”¹

The *Visions of the Worlds Vanitie* is an imitation of the following poems, Bellay's *Visions* and Petrarch's; it may therefore be taken as typical of them. It is a series of sonnets in each of which is presented a fable illustrating the occasional success of the weak over the strong. In the fifth sonnet, for example, the poet sees a whale slain by a swordfish, and learns therefore not to despise—

“Whatever thing seems small in common eyes.”²

The eleven other sonnets all teach the same principles of life. In the *Visions of Bellay* the truth illustrated is that there is no stability in earthly greatness. The poet sees a palace of crystal standing one moment, and wrecked by an earthquake the next. In the *Visions of Petrarch* the motive is the same.

With the exception of the *Teares of the Muses*, these poems are, as has been seen, translations and paraphrases. It is hardly by accident that they all

¹ *Works*, p. 531.

² *Ibid.*, p. 537.

express the moral side of the Renaissance. The revolt against the conventional amorous subjects of the sonnets, indicated by Constable's and Barnes's spiritual sequences, was but one manifestation of the new and deeper vein of thought, which, perhaps inspired by the combination of the Renaissance and the Reformation, certainly ennobled by Spenser's Platonic genius, was to culminate in Milton. Within the limits of this study, it will be seen to run parallel with the lighter, courtlier lyric motives such as characterize especially the song-books. It should be noted that this rather gloomy moralizing does not become a literary fashion as do the sonneteering and the song-writing; it is found in the separate publications of individual poets.

In this same year, 1591, was published Michael Drayton's *Harmony of the Church*,¹ a series of lyrics founded on Biblical stories or paraphrased from songs in the Bible. The *Song of Solomon* and the *Song of Deborah* are typical of the subjects. The volume is a sacred miscellany, taking its general form from the popular methods of publishing, and deriving its subject-matter from that moral and religious thought-movement which has just been noticed. The trend which the book illustrates is more important than the lyrics it contains; they are not in Drayton's best manner. In fact, all that the poet accomplishes by his paraphrasing is to destroy the

¹ *Complete Works*, the Rev. Richard Hooper, 3 vols., London, 1876.

rhythm of the Biblical prose. A fair example is this stanza from the *Song of Miriam*:—

“The Lord Jehovah is a man of war ;
Pharaoh, his chariots, and his mighty host,
Were by His Hand, in the wild waters lost,
His captains drowned in the Red Sea so far.”¹

Drayton, who, next to Spenser, is the prominent lyricist of this decade, published in 1593 an imitation of the *Shepheards Calender*, called the *Shepheards Garland*.² The volume consists of nine eclogues, in which occur several lyrics. The first eclogue is a love-plaint of a familiar type; the poet beholds the return of spring, and grieves the more over his unhappy passion. The second eclogue has for its subject the vanity of life. It contains one fine lyric in praise of love which is Platonic in motive; love is addressed as the power that elevates the human mind in the pursuit of beauty—a familiar theme with Spenser also, especially in the *Amoretti*. Drayton's brief passage of three stanzas has hardly sufficient length for proper lyric development, but its emotional quality is strong:—

“O divine love, which so aloft canst raise,
And lift the mind out of this earthly mire,
And dost inspire the pen with so hie prayse,
As with the heavens doth equal man's desire,” etc.³

The third eclogue is a conventional praise of a shepherdess, Beta. Only the meter of the poem

¹ *Complete Works*, iii. p. 244.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

² Reprinted by Collier.

need be mentioned. The stanza is composed of six lines; an alexandrine and a septenary, a couplet in tetrapody verse, and a couplet of septenaries. The sharp variation in the speed of the lines is not altogether pleasant:—

“O thou faire silver Thames: O cleerest chrystal flood,
Beta alone the Phenix is, of all thy watery brood,
The Queene of virgins only she:
And thou the Queene of floods shalt be:
Let all thy nymphs be joyful then, to see this happy day,
Thy Beta now alone shall be the subject of my lay.”¹

The fourth eclogue is perhaps best known because it contains an elegy on Sidney. It is not a Greek elegy, but a personal song of the miscellany type. The fifth eclogue, a pictorial description of the poet's mistress; the sixth, in praise of the “Muse of Brittanye”; the eighth, a ballad in the meter and manner of Chaucer's Sir Thopas, and the ninth, a love-plaint—all are too obvious to need further mention. The seventh, however, in reproof of love, is a remarkable example of the extent to which the Elizabethan metrists practised syn-copation. In some lines of this tetrapody movement every word bears the accent, an effect that has been noted already in Spenser, Drayton's model.

“Oh spightfull wayward wretched love,
Woe to Venus which did nurse thee,
Heavens and earth thy plagues do prove,
Gods and men have cause to curse thee.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

Thought's grief, heart's woe,
Hope's paine, bodies languish,
Envies rage, sleepes foe,
Fancies fraud, soules anguish," etc.¹

In 1595 appeared Robert Southwell's *St. Peter's Complaint*, a book of sacred verse, containing besides the title poem a number of short lyrics.² The title poem is a very long lament by St. Peter over his denial of Christ. Without possessing lyric form, it has the same dramatic lyrical quality that is seen in the Anglo-Saxon poem of the *Wanderer*. The power of emotional expression is very strong. A better example, however, of Southwell's genius and method is the second piece in the book, *Mary Magdalen's Blush*. Mary speaks:—

"The signes of shame that stayne my blushing face,
Rise from the feelinge of my raving fittes!" etc.³

She makes the blush, which is the lyric stimulus of the poem, a symbol of the conflict in her soul between "sense" and "grace," to use Southwell's terms. This mystical allegorizing is the first characteristic of his work. The manner in which he accomplishes it is sometimes hard; otherwise it would be easy to connect him with the seventeenth-century "metaphysicians" like Vaughan. The same method reappears in another form in

¹ *Complete Works*, iii. p. 50.

² *Complete Poems*, A. B. Grosart, *Fuller Worthies Library*, 1872.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

the third lyric, *Mary Magdalen's Complaint at Christ's Death*. The purpose of this poem, instead of reflecting Mary's soul in a physical symbol, is to typify by her grief the proper doctrinal attitude toward Christ. The method here is very subtle, a mere play on words; the first three stanzas repeat the formula that since life has departed from life, death should take away whatever life remains:—

“Sith my life from life is parted,
Death come take thy portion;
Who survives when life is murdered,
Lives by mere extortion,” etc.¹

The literary merits of Southwell's lyrics are intellectual rather than emotional. No matter how earnest he is in his subject-matter, the expression usually is attractive for its cleverness. For example, he finds a new and effective use for a title in the poem, *A Childe My Choyce*.² It is the familiar hymn of praise to Christ, but a certain surprise is secured to the subject by the misleading title, which is more apt to suggest human affection.

Southwell's most frequent manner, and most unattractive, is in the gnomic or proverbial vein already familiar in the moral poems of the miscellanies. It is recognizable in such titles as *Losse in Delaye*. In these lyrics, if he sometimes becomes imaginative, it is noteworthy that the image also is proverbial, as in this very poem:—

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

² *Ibid.*, p. 70.

"Tyme weares all his lockes before,
Take thy hold upon his forehead;
When he flies he turnes no more,
And behind his scalpe is naked." ¹

When Southwell attempts a subject at once conventional and yet capable of emotional treatment, he is at his best; such a subject he finds in the birth of Christ. The poem, *New Prince, New Pompe*, echoes the Middle English theme of the Saviour born to poverty; Southwell comforts himself with the old doctrine of humility:—

"This stable is a Prince's courte,
This cribb His chair of State." ²

The best lyric, however, and the best known of all Southwell's poems, is the *Burning Babe*.³ Perhaps it is prized the more because Ben Jonson admired it. It has Southwell's characteristic metaphorical bent, and his gnomic faculty appears in the details of the allegory. But in intensity of feeling it is almost unique among his lyrics, and in metrical form it represents probably the finest use of the septenary in the whole Elizabethan period.

The given quotations serve to illustrate Southwell's lyrical quality and his metrical acquirements. As has been indicated, he is a new figure among Elizabethan lyricists. His poetic gifts are few; he might just as well have written all his works in prose. But since verse was the medium

¹ *Complete Poems*, p. 76. ² *Ibid.*, p. 108. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

in which he chose to express his intense religious emotion and his fine intellect, those undoubted qualities of heart and mind, even when their expression is inadequate, may be accepted for themselves.

In the same year, 1595, appeared *Astrophel*, a collection of elegies by Spenser and others, on Sir Philip Sidney.¹ The title poem, which is linked with the two following lyrics by narrative sections, attempts to raise Sidney's story to the level of a myth. The general tone of this narrative-lyric is Greek and suggests the Homeric Hymns. *Astrophel's* genius and accomplishments are described; then his popularity among all men, and especially the love between him and Stella; all his songs were for her, and all his brave deeds; while fighting in her honor he was killed; she died of grief; the gods turned them into flowers—Penthia or Starlight, and *Astrophel*.

The second lyric, supposed to have been written by the Countess of Pembroke, is nearer to the normal Greek elegy. The woods and sylvan deities are invoked to assist in lamentations for *Astrophel*. Then the motive of untimely death is introduced:—

“What cruell hand of cursed foe unknowne,
Hath crompt the stalke which bore so faire a flowre?
Untimely crompt, before it well were growne,
And cleane defaced in untimely houre.”²

Then the elegy returns for a moment to the con-

¹ Spenser's *Works*, p. 559.

² *Ibid.*, p. 562.

temptation of Sidney's loss; who now can sing such songs? Let no one longer rejoice in this life, now he is gone. The religious and Platonic tendencies of this decade show themselves in an inquiry after the dead poet's soul:—

“But that immortall spirit, which was dekt
 With all the dowries of celestiall grace,
 By soveraine choyce from th^e hevenly quires select,
 And lineally derived from Angels race,
 O! what is now of it become aread.
 Ay me! can so divine a thing be dead!
 Ah! no; it is not dead, ne can it die
 But lives for aie, in blissful Paradise.”¹

The elegy ends with the contemplation of the soul receiving its merited reward.

The third poem, supposed to have been written by Lodowick Bryskett,² is very ornate in style, but its structure is simple. It is divided into four sections. In the first, the nymphs are invoked to mourn the death of Sidney, taken away like an untimely flower. In the second part, Sidney's deathbed is described, in which scene several classical deities appear; in the third section is described Stella's mourning, and in the fourth, the poet consoles himself with the thought of Sidney's happiness in Paradise and of his fame on earth.³

The fourth poem, a *Pastorall Æglogue*,⁴ contains

¹ Spenser's *Works*, p. 562.

² *Ibid.*, p. 563.

³ This elegy has acquired a certain position in literature from the theory that Milton was influenced by it in writing *Lycidas*. Cf. Guest, *English Rhythms*, W. W. Skeat, p. 265.

⁴ Spenser's *Works*, p. 566.

a lyrical passage in which the alternate strophes are sung by two shepherds. This funeral song has but slight lyric development. The first three strophes are devoted to the praise of Sidney and of Stella, and to pastoral expressions of grief at his death. The last strophe finds the same religious consolation as the preceding elegies. The remaining poems in the collection, one by Matthew Royden, one by Sir Walter Raleigh, the elegy that we have mentioned before,¹ and one by an unknown writer, are entirely of the same kind as these examples, and need no further discussion.

In the same year the *Amoretti* were published, with their crowning love-song, the *Epithalamium*.² ✓ This splendid poem is considered by many critics the foremost of Elizabethan lyrics. It illustrates the many-sided tastes of the pastoral lyricists. It is idyllic in method; the emotion is advanced through a series of lyric units, each inspired by a separate picture. Strictly speaking, each stanza, with its own inspiration, is a song in itself, and the complete poem is a series rather than an organic whole. But the lyrical emotion aroused by all the motives is the same in every case, so that, in the broad sense, it would be difficult to deny unity to the poem. In the subject-matter, as well as in the emotion, unity is secured by describing the events of one day in order from daybreak to midnight.

Out of the idyllic method come the chief orna-

¹ See above, p. 89.

² *Works*, p. 587.

ments of the lyric — the many exquisite pictures. The poet in his delight turns rapidly from one vision to another, and paints what he sees in an exclamation. Elaborate in detail as many stanzas are, they seem to render their meaning all at once, almost in a word; there is no evidence of labored preparation. Perhaps the most charming picture is that of the bride before the altar. It is the triumph of lyric description; the poet inspires in the reader through the picture the very emotion that it inspired in him: —

“ Behold, whiles she before the altar stands,
Hearing the holy priest that to her speakes,
And blesseth her with his two happy hands,
How the red roses flush up in her cheekes,
And the pure snow, with goodly vermill stayne
Like crimsin dyde in grayne.”¹

The mass of curious erudition in this lyric is characteristic of Spenser and his times. The wonder is that the singing quality of the lines is so little retarded by it. To Spenser the muses were indeed “ye learned sisters.” He uses astronomy in Chaucer’s elaborate fashion to fix the date of the wedding-day. He expounds in one winged stanza half a dozen points of folk-lore. On classical mythology he has ever a ready word; twenty-four deities are mentioned, and their functions described; the poet can even stop to enlarge on an unfamiliar legend of Diana.

¹ Spenser’s *Works*, p. 589.

This pagan background is made to accord, strangely enough, with the thoroughly Christian elements in the poem. To mingle the two systems was not indeed unusual with Renascence poets, but Spenser justifies the use by making the pagan deities represent the mystery of nature, and confining the Christian system to the expression of the soul; so that there is no conflict. He realizes this pagan sense of the mysterious personality in nature best in the lovely prayer to the rising moon: —

“ Who is the same, which at my window peepes;
Or whose is that faire face that shines so bright?
Is it not Cinthia, she that never sleepes,
But walkes about high heaven al the night?
O! fayrest goddesse, do thou not envy
My love with me to spy;
For thou likewise didst love,” etc.¹

If each motive in the *Epithalamium* be considered by itself, it will appear that Spenser has used entirely conventional material. The effect of the whole, however, is spontaneous. The explanation is that the poet has designed situations out of which the old motives seem naturally to rise. For example, as the poem is the culmination of his sonnets, and as a favorite theme in the sonnet-series is, as we have seen, the physical description of the lady, it is but natural that Spenser should have such a description here. He puts new life into the theme, however, by describing his mistress

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 591.

at the moment when, after long and impatient waiting, he catches the first sight of her, dressed for her bridal. The extravagant terms of the sonnets, "ivory forehead," "cherry lips," and "eyes like saphyres," here seem not only excusable but natural, because we already understand the poet's love-delirium. The elevation of tone is sustained here also by the added description of the lady's spiritual and mental virtues — the Platonic touch.

The external form of the *Epithalamium* is that of a rather irregular *canzone*.¹ Not all the stanzas have the same number of lines, but they approximate a common form, and the envoy to the bride is quite in the spirit of a *commiato*. In the average stanza the only irregularity is an extra short line in the second *piede*; the other parts are quatrains, with two lines forming the *concatenazione* between the *fronte* and the *sirima*. A good example is the eleventh stanza:—

<i>Piede</i>	{	" But if ye saw that which no eyes can see, The inward beauty of her lively spright, Garnisht with heavenly guifts of high degree, Much more then would ye wonder at that sight,
<i>Piede</i>	{	And stand astonisht lyke to those which red Medusaes mazeful hed. There dwels sweet love, and constant chastity, Unspotted fayth, and comely womanhood, Regard of honour, and mild modesty ;

¹ Cf. the account of the *canzone* form, chapter ix. p. 296.

<i>Concatenazione</i>	{ There vertue raynes as Queene in royal throne, And giveth lawes alone,
<i>Volta</i>	{ The which the base affections do obay, And yeeld theyr services unto her will ; Ne thought of thing uncomely ever may Thereto approach to tempt her mind to ill.
<i>Volta</i>	{ Had ye once seene these her celestial treasures, And unrevealed pleasures, Then would ye wonder, and her praises sing, That al the woods should answer, and your echo ring." ¹

In 1596 appeared Spenser's *Fowre Hymnes* and the *Prothalamium*.² The hymns are chiefly important for their subject-matter, and belong properly to a study of Platonism rather than to a history of the lyric. In manner they are narrative or didactic; yet their great melody and their personal emotion and rapture give them, if not lyric form, at least very high lyrical quality. In the *Hymne in Honour of Love*, love is explained to be the principle that brought chaos into order, and cradled the world. Man, partaking of a heavenly nature, desires the heavenly object of love, which is beauty. Love, then, the tyrant god, delights in piercing human hearts with his arrow, and makes beauty coy, that so he may try the loyalty of his servants. The poem ends with a description of the paradise to which Love admits those of his servants who prove faithful.

¹ Spenser's *Works*, p. 589.

² *Ibid.*, p. 592.

The *Hymne in Honour of Beautie*¹ is devoted to the praise of this Platonic conception of the object of love. In fashioning the world, the Creator had before him a pattern, an ideal. Wherever that ideal appears, it is what we call beauty. It is to beauty in this sense that true love dedicates itself; the attraction of earthy color and charm, fair lips and bright eyes, is too transitory to hold the eternal affections of the soul. The souls that have most divine beauty acquire outward beauty in their bodies:—

“For of the soule the bodie forme doth take;
For soule is forme, and doth the bodie make.”²

The two exceptions to this law are recognized; sometimes a fair soul inhabits a deformed body, and sometimes a fair body is abused in sin. It follows that all true lovers should be faithful to the original pattern or ideal. For each lover a companion is foreordained:—

“For Love is a celestially harmonie
Of likely harts composed of starres consent,
Which joyne together in sweete sympathie,
To worke ech others joy and true content,
Which they have harbourd since their first descent
Out of the heavenly bowres where they did see
And know each other here beloved to bee.”³

The poem ends with a prayer to Love and Venus, to assist the poet in winning her whose “conquering beautie” has taken captive his heart.

¹ Spenser's *Works*, p. 596. ² *Ibid.*, p. 597. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 598.

In the *Hymne of Heavenly Love*¹ the poet applies the same poetic method and the same Platonic theories to spiritual love, as before he had applied to human passion. He tells how, in the beginning, God, enamored of His own beauty, begot the other persons of the Trinity; then, of the same love, He created the angels; after they rebelled, He created man to fill their place; then, after man too had fallen, He redeemed him with the sacrifice of Christ. The poet then exhorts men to follow this example of unselfish love.

The *Hymne of Heavenly Beautie*² is the least successful of the four lyrics. Its object is too sublime even for Spenser's lofty mood, and in the attempt to indicate his fine conceptions, he takes all but trained scholastic minds out of their depth. The poem is more intellectual and less lyrical in quality than the other three. The firmament is taken as the first type of divine beauty; then, in the next grade, the sun and moon are contemplated; then the unseen stars, and the borders of that heaven wherein dwells the First Cause; then the habitation of human souls in bliss; then the region of ideas, in the Platonic sense, and of pure intelligence; then through still higher conceptions of beauty the poet contemplates the image of God himself.

The *Prothalamium*,³ published the same year, was written in honor of the double wedding of the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 599.

² *Ibid.*, p. 602.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 605.

Earl of Worcester's daughters, Lady Elizabeth and Lady Katherine. This song, from the nature of its subject, suggests comparison with the *Epithalamium*. It is written in a similar stanza, approximating the Italian *canzone*, though lacking the *commiato*. It is complimentary rather than passionate in tone, having none of the spontaneity with which the poet greeted his own marriage day. The pictures, in the same idyllic manner, are carefully elaborated, and the carefulness is perceptible. The structure of the poem is narrative rather than lyric. The poet, standing on the banks of the Thames, sees a group of nymphs gathering posies. While he watches them, two swans of marvellous whiteness come down the river. The nymphs greet the birds with delight, strewing their flowers on the water, and crowning the swans with garlands. One of the nymphs greets them with a wedding-song — the poet's device for a direct complimentary address. Then the birds proceed to the Earl of Somerset's castle on the Thames, where they are met and wedded by the bridegrooms. There is a remarkable blending of imagery and realistic scenery in the quick transition from the nymphs and the allegorical swans to the minute account of the London water-front.

In 1598 appeared Barnfield's *Encomium of Lady Pecunia*, a humorous praise of money.¹ The slightness of the subject removes the lyric from serious

¹ *Illustrations of Old Eng. Lit.*, J. Payne Collier, 1866.

consideration, but the technic in all its details is beautiful. The punning style used throughout is well illustrated by the third stanza:—

“You, you alone can make my muse to speake,
And tell a golden tale, with silver tongue ;
You only can my pleasing silence break,
And add some music to a merry songue ;
But amongst all the five, in music’s art,
I worst can brook the counter tenor’s part.”

There is the customary compliment to the Queen; if Pecunia is “queen of harts,” Eliza is queen of diamonds. In the second edition of the poem, in 1605, this passage is converted into a praise of the new king. The one serious note in the poem is an echo of the Reformation; in the thirteenth stanza sarcastic reference is made to the sale of pardons by the Pope.

In 1599 William Jaggard, a noted pirate publisher, printed a volume of twenty poems under the title, *The Passionate Pilgrim, by W. Shakespeare*.¹ Only five of the poems, however, were by the great poet, and those were published without his consent. He was “much offended” with Jaggard, and probably expressed himself to some purpose, for his name was removed from a few copies.² The book is really a miscellany, but it has its proper place in this chapter because its subject-matter is characteristic of the sonnet-period. Shakspeare’s contributions include three poems from *Love’s Labour’s Lost* and

¹ *Works*, Cambridge Edition, Wm. Aldis Wright, ix. p. 395.

² Sidney Lee, p. 182.

two sonnets. The most important of the five is the sonnet now numbered one hundred and forty four — "Two loves I have of comfort and despair." Barnfield is represented by two selections, of which the sonnet on Dowland and Spenser was long thought to be by Shakspeare:—

"If music and sweet poetry agree,
As they must needs, the sister and the brother,
Then must the love be great 'twixt thee and me,
Because thou lov'st the one and I the other.
Dowland to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch
Upon the lute doth ravish human sense;
Spenser to me, whose deep conceit is such,
As, passing all conceit, needs no defense," etc.

Barnfield's other lyric, "As it fell upon a day,"¹ is a charming variation of an old song-convention. Instead of overhearing a lover bemoaning his fate, the poet hearkens to the nightingale, who teaches him how a true friend may be told from a false. The theme recalls the moral poems of the miscellanies. The test of friendship is a reverse of fortune:—

"But if Fortune once do frown,
Then farewell his great renown;
They that fawned on him before,
Use his company no more.
He that is thy friend indeed,
He will help thee in thy need."

Bartholomew Griffin is represented by a garbled version of a sonnet from *Fidessa*, on the subject of

¹ Shakspeare's *Works*, ix. p. 412.

Venus and Adonis. This theme reappears in some of the anonymous poems of the volume.

Undoubtedly the best lyric in the *Passionate Pilgrim* is Marlowe's "Come live with me."¹ It is a perfect example of Elizabethan song. It has its literary sources in the pastoral period soon coming to a close, and its distinction is that it expresses faithfully a sincere mood through the most unreal images of this unreal convention. Within its short compass it includes all the furniture of the Italianate Elizabethan idyl — mountains and valleys in a theatrical "set piece," immovable shepherds feeding their motionless flocks by the arrested fall of the river. The poet promises this landscape to his love, and gifts — a bed of roses, a wreath of flowers, a gown clasped with amber and coral. No gift so rich had that earlier shepherd for Amaryllis — "Lo, ten apples I bring thee, plucked from that very place where thou didst bid me pluck them, and others to-morrow I will bring thee."² Marlowe's conception of the pastoral is as remote as possible from Theocritus's realism. But, perhaps because the convention is so frankly accepted, it does not detract from the fundamental sincerity of the poem.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 411. This famous lyric comes to us with an interesting history. In the *Passionate Pilgrim* it lacks the fourth and sixth stanzas, and is anonymous. It appears complete and signed "C. Marlowe" in *England's Helicon*, which also contains the famous reply to it by Sir Walter Raleigh. The second edition of the *Complete Angler* quotes it with an additional stanza.

² Theocritus, Idyll iii, Lang, p. 20.

None of Shakspeare's spring-songs, in spite of their English realism, are fresher, brighter, or happier in mood. In one respect the song suggests Herrick and the Greek Anthology; it achieves a beauty of mere expression that is durable — *aere perennius*; the language into which the pastoral mood is crystallized seems proof against time's changes of thought and taste.

Francis Thynne's *Emblems and Epigrammes*, 1600, contains, among a mass of poor writing, one interesting poem, which suggests in tone later minor poets such as Marvell. The affection of a recluse for literature, and the personal appreciation of it, is remarkable for so early a poem. It is called *The Ivy*.

“Thow Bacchus plant, which alwaies greene dost springe,
Poets reward, and glorie of their penn,
The touchstone of wyne which to the sprite doth bringe
A quickening force to rouse the will of menn,
Why dost thou clime my house so spreadingly,
And yield thy sacred budds so frutefullie ?

In vaine thou doest ascend these rurall tyles
Which profound Virgill never yet behelde,
Nor wanton Ovid, whose rare poem compyles
Strange changed shapes which abstruse science yeald,
Nor wittie Flaccus did hange his harpe here,
Nor doth Tibullus gold in this appere.

For in this cottage rurall muse doth reste ;
Here dwelleth Cherill, and Topas the knighte ;
Pore oten ryme is onlie here exprest,
Nor helicon verse or muse of rare delight ;
But since thou hast this misticke wall adorned,
Doe flourish longe, all though my verse be scorned.”¹

¹ *Early Eng. Text Soc.*, lxiv. p. 82.

In 1602 appeared Thomas Campion's *Observations in the Art of English Poesy*,¹ the famous pamphlet in which this graceful Elizabethan rimer advocated a return to classical quantitative verse. He illustrated his proposed rhythms with original experiments, which in all but one case are no less unhappy than most quantitative poems in English. The one exception, however, illustrating a trochaic strophe, deserves to be quoted here as an example, not only of graceful melody, but of perfect lyrical form. The motive — Laura's beauty — is introduced in the first words, developed through an Elizabethan "conceit" of human beauty in general, and closed with a philosophic contemplation of perfect beauty in the abstract: —

"Rose-cheeked Laura, come ;
Sing thou smoothly with thy beauty's
Silent music, either other
Sweetly gracing.

Lovely forms do flow
From concent divinely framed ;
Heaven is music, and thy beauty's
Birth is heavenly.

These dull notes we sing
Discords need for helps to grace them,
Only beauty purely loving
Knows no discord,

But still moves delight,
Like clear springs renewed by flowing,
Ever perfect, ever in them-
Selves eternal." ²

¹ *Works*, A. H. Bullen.

² *Ibid.*, p. 254.

About the year 1605 appeared Drayton's *Poemes Lyrick and Pastorall*,¹ containing the splendid ode on the battle of Agincourt. This poem, like the *Battle of Brunanburh*, and like some of Minot's songs, is remarkable for its choric quality; the voice of the whole people is heard in it. In modern English literature it has hardly a parallel as a national song, with the possible exception of some of Campbell's odes, and Tennyson's *Charge of the Light Brigade*. Tennyson may have been influenced by Drayton. Their two battle-songs have almost the same narrative method, almost the same rhythm, and exactly the same cadence at the end:—

“ On happy Crispin day
Fought was this noble fray,
Which fame did not delay
To England to carry ;
O when shall Englishmen,
With such acts fill a pen ?
Or England breed again
Such a King Harry ? ”

To the year 1612 belongs George Chapman's *Hymn to Hymen*, a wedding-song in honor of the Princess Elizabeth. The poem was published along with Nat. Field's *A Woman is a Weathercock*.² Like all of Chapman's lyrics, it is rather conventional. It has no sense of such lyric form as we have found in Spenser's *Epithalamium*, nor has it any real

¹ *The Spenser Society Publications*, new series, iv. 1891, p. 32.

² Chapman's *Works*, Chatto & Windus, 1875, p. 176.

motive other than the desire to compliment the princess. It praises in formal terms the sacred institution of marriage, and then adds good wishes for the prosperity of the bridal couple. The same general criticism applies to Chapman's *Epicedium*, of the same year,¹—a funeral-song on the death of Prince Henry. This rather elaborate lyric is over-weighted by allegory and narrative; there is no direct expression of grief at all. It must always remain a puzzle that Chapman, writing so late, and doubtless acquainted with good models, both classical and contemporary, should in these lyrics, or in his other work, adopt the worn-out literary methods of the preceding century. There is no more lyrical ability shown in this funeral-song than in the ordinary epitaphs of the miscellanies.²

In 1613 appeared the first part of William Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals*.³ This is an imitation of the *Shepherds Calender*, a series of eclogues containing occasional lyrics. With all allowance for Browne's inferior gifts, a comparison of this

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

² The deaths of Sir Philip Sidney, Queen Elizabeth, and Prince Henry called forth a profusion of funeral poems. The quality of these effusions was very poor indeed. Mr. Churton Collins, in his edition of Cyril Tourneur's *Plays and Poems* (p. xxviii), mentions a number of elegies inspired by Prince Henry's death. The author has been furnished with a list of some twenty more, and if the poems on Sidney and Elizabeth were added, the total would be most formidable. But the entire mass contains no lyric of merit, and there is no excuse here for their further mention.

³ *Poems*, Gordon Goodwin, *The Muses Library*, 1894.

book with its Spenserian model, or with Drayton's *Shepheards Garland*, will show that the strict pastoral convention is already out of date. The mood seems antiquated. The lyrics express old themes; they have little emotional force, and the skill shown in their technic is small. In the first eclogue there is a song on the uncertainty of life. It represents that familiar moral strain, characteristic of Renaissance poetry and peculiarly dear to the English temperament, which we have already noticed in the miscellanies: —

“What's that, compact of earth, infused with air;
A certain made full with uncertainties;
Swayed by the motion of each several sphere;
Who's fed with nought but infelicities;” etc.¹

The third eclogue has a lyric in which one shepherd questions another, who is in love. This old dialogue theme dates back to the beginning of pastoral verse; it is the motive of the tenth idyl of Theocritus. In Browne's version the situation is handled rather listlessly, as if it were too familiar to exercise spontaneous charm: —

“A. Fie, Shepherd's swain, why sit'st thou all alone,
Whilst other lads are sporting on the leys?
B. Joy may have company, but grief hath none;
Where pleasures never came, sports cannot please,” etc.²

The fifth eclogue has a dirge for Prince Henry. The poem is in no formal sense an elegy; it lacks the Greek development of theme, and it expresses

¹ *Poems*, i. p. 53.

² *Ibid.*, i. p. 90.

few of the typical elegiac motives. It is conventionally respectful in its attitude of sorrow, and when it becomes imaginative, the image is usually fantastic, as in the statement that "Hope lay bedrid, and all pleasures dying."¹

Browne's other writings that come within the date selected as the limit of this study, may as well be considered here. In 1614 he published his *Shepherd's Pipe*, a collection of eclogues similar to his better known pastorals. The lyrics contained in it are of very mediocre quality. Only one, an elegy on the poet's friend, Thomas Manwood, needs passing notice. The elegiac consolation is religious; the friend has outstripped his comrades and reached the harbor of bliss early, because he was best fitted for the voyage of life.²

In 1616 the second part of *Britannia's Pastorals* was published. It contains but one lyric of any importance. In the second eclogue is a graceful rendering of the myth of Adonis. The theme takes us back to the poets of the sixteenth century, but the lightness of execution is more suggestive of the new song-writers, like Campion:—

"Venus by Adonis' side
Crying kissed and kissing cried,
Wrung her hands and tore her hair
For Adonis dying there," etc.³

In the third eclogue of the first part of the pastorals is a song on the *carpe diem* theme, of that

¹ *Ibid.*, i. p. 142.

² *Ibid.*, ii. p. 139.

³ *Ibid.*, i. p. 232.

thoughtful Renaissance mood that Spenser introduced into his Bower of Bliss. It is considered last because it illustrates the most typical transition of the period. From Spenser's song to the even more famous "Gather ye roses," of Herrick, the theme undergoes a significant change of tone. In Tasso and in Spenser, his imitator in this song, the mood is contemplative and sad; the poet is thinking of the shortness of life, of the roses that have perished, rather than of the present flowers that he bids gather; in Spenser's words:—

"So passeth, in the passing of a day,
Of mortall life, the leafe, the bud, the flowre;
Ne more doth florish after first decay,
That earst was sought to deck both bed and bowre
Of many a lady, and many a Paramoure.
Gather therefore the Rose," etc.¹

In Herrick's familiar song this deep mood has disappeared. The pathos of life is not felt, and the theme passes out of its brooding into a light-hearted summons to enjoy the passing hour. Browne's version stands in between, with something of the early thoughtfulness, and yet with the lighter manner that was becoming fashionable:—

"Gentle nymphs, be not refusing,
Love's neglect is time's abusing,
They and beauty are but lent you.
Take the one and keep the other;
Love keeps fresh what age doth smother;
Beauty gone you will repent you."²

¹ Spenser's *Works*, p. 153.

² Browne's *Poems*, i. p. 98.

CHAPTER VII

THE SONG-BOOKS

THE last and most characteristic phase of lyric composition in the Elizabethan period was the large body of songs for music, published under the titles of *madrigals* and *airs*. The term "Elizabethan," applied to lyrics, suggests to most people the qualities of these songs — shortness, and perhaps, as a consequence, emotional instead of narrative treatment, and great verbal melody. This "singing" quality has often been attributed to the musical atmosphere in which the songs were composed; the historians of literature usually state that the original close relation between the tunes and the words is the cause of the musical suggestion which the words undoubtedly possess. This explanation is founded on a misunderstanding of the condition of Elizabethan music, which had little of those qualities of rhythm and lightness that the critics try to explain. It is true, however, that this large number of songs for music was called out by a musical fashion. Though one of the slowest arts to develop, music had its share of the impulse of the Renaissance and the Reforma-

MADRIGAL.

From John Morley's *Madrigals to Four Voices*, 1594.

Reprinted in full in Hawkins's *History of Music*, iii. p. 350.

Be - sides a foun - taine, be-sides a foun - taine of .
 Be - sides a foun - taine, be-sides a foun -
 Be - sides a foun - taine, be-sides a
 Be - sides a foun - taine,

sweet..... bri - er.... and... ro - ses,
 taine of sweet..... brier and ro-ses, heard I two lov-ers
 foun - taine of sweet brier and ro - ses, heard I two
 heard I two lovers

heard I two lov-ers talk in sweet and wan-ton glo -
 lov-ing talk in sweet and wan - - ton glo - -
 lov - ers talk in sweet and wan - - ton glo -
 talk in sweet and wan - ton glo - -

tion, and in England its flowering happened to coincide with a period of great literary activity. The people wished to sing the new madrigal music from Italy; the majority of them, however, were not entirely at home with the Italian words; it was but natural that ready lyrists should fit English words to the new music. This was exactly the origin of the first madrigal book, *Musica Transalpina*, 1588, by Nicholas Younge. It contained fifty-seven Italian madrigals with English paraphrases. If any further proof were needed that the development of music and of poetry is not identical, it might be noted that in Italy, where the madrigal music was first developed, its use produced no such lyrics as in England.

We have already used the term "madrigal." It has frequently led literary critics astray, because of its use in music as well as in literature. It is most familiar as the name of a strict Italian stanza-form, which will be considered later. To the Elizabethans, however, the madrigal was a musical form, a particular kind of part-song. When the critic, therefore, looking over a short, irregular lyric labelled "madrigal," says that the term is loosely applied, he does not consider that the music to which that lyric was set was a strict madrigal.

The history of this musical form, which dominates the first part of the song-book period, is bound up with the Renaissance and with the Reformation. The music of culture was the music of

the church; the secularization that accompanied these adventurous times, was in this art at first satisfied with setting the strict church music to secular words. The result of this first step out of the religious province was the madrigal. The music was of the kind illustrated to most people by the works of Palestrina. It was polyphonic; that is, instead of having one melody, harmonized by other voice-parts, all the parts were of equal importance, and, following the rules of counter-point and fugue-writing, took up the theme in turn. The effect of such music is very smooth and sustained, but it lacks the regular shocks of rhythm and the melodic definiteness to which a modern ear is accustomed. The enjoyment of it is intellectual rather than emotional. It was to such music that the dainty and joyous lyrics of the first song-books were set. In the words of the latest musical historian: "Genuine madrigals were written on the same polyphonic principles as church music, and many of them were as serious in style. A self-respecting composer would hardly venture further in the direction of secular style than a little relaxation of the rigid observance of the rules of the modes and the high grammatical orthodoxies, and a little gaiety and definiteness in melodious and lively passages. No doubt madrigals became contaminated before the end of the sixteenth century, for secularity was in the air. But the system upon which they were based, and the subtleties of

art which were the pride of their composers, were not capable of being applied in real, undisguised secular music.”¹

The madrigal was written for at least two voices, usually for four or five. It never contained more than one musical movement, and therefore had shortness and unity of form. These last qualities had great influence upon the lyric; for in order to set words to such music, the English poet had to achieve a terseness and brevity of expression which was in direct contrast with the diffuse pastoral school. The Italian musicians had ready to their hand two literary forms admirably adapted to their purpose — the literary madrigal and the *rispetto*. The madrigal was a very short idyl, a picture poem, from six to ten lines long. In its shortest form it consisted of two triplets; to these might be added one or two couplets. A good illustration may be taken from *Musica Transalpina*, published in 1597: —

“Nel piu fiorit’ Aprile,
All hor che i vaghi augelli,
Di sopra gl’ arboscelli:
Cantano in vario suon dolce e gentile.
A gara ancor con lor cantava Clori,
Di lei e del suo Elpin i dolci amori.”²

In the song-book the English rendering shows a

¹ The *Oxford History of Music*, iii; the *Music of the Seventeenth Century*, C. Hubert H. Parry, 1902, p. 6.

² *Musa Madrigalesca*, Thomas Oliphant, London, 1837, p. 56.

faithful imitation of every syllable, in order not to disturb the phrases of the music : —

“ In flower of April springing,
When pleasant birds to sport them,
Among the woods consort them ;
Warbling with cheerful notes and sweetly singing,
For joy Clora the fair her song was chaunting,
Of her, and her Elpine, the sweet loves vaunting.”¹

The *rispetto* was a literary development of a popular form.² Its subject was some phase of love. In form it was less variable than the madrigal, having six lines on two alternate rimes, followed by a final couplet. A typical example is from *Musica Transalpina*, Book I., 1588 : —

“ Chi salirà per me, Madonn' in Cielo,
A riportarm' il mio perduto ingegno ?
Che poi ch' uscì di bei vostr' occh' il telo,
Ch' il cor mi fisse ognor perdendo vegno ;
Ne di tanta jattura mi querelo
Pur che non cresca, ma stia a questra segno,
Ch' io dubito se più se va scemando,
Che stolto me n'andrò pe 'l mond' errando.”³

The translation in the song-book is more faithful, but hardly more felicitous, than the paraphrase of the madrigal : —

“ Who will ascend to Heav'n and there obtain me
My wits forlorn and silly sense decayed ?
For since I took my wound that sore did pain me
From your fair eyes, my sp'rits are all dismayed,

¹ *Musa Madrigalesca*, p. 56.

² Translations of a number of *rispetti* may be found in *Popular Songs of Tuscany*, an essay by J. A. Symonds, in his *Sketches and Studies in Southern Europe*, 1880, i. p. 228.

³ *Musa Madrigalesca*, p. 43.

Nor of so great a loss do I complain me,
If it increase not but in bounds be stayed ;
Yet if I still grow worse, I shall be lotted
To wander thro' the world, fond and assotted." ¹

With such forms as these forced upon them as models by the demands of the music, it is but natural that the English poets should have produced a new kind of lyric. This fresh fashion of song can best be appreciated by a chronological survey of the song-books themselves.

Among the first was William Byrd's *Psalmes, Sonnets and Songs of Sadness and Pietie*, 1588.² Byrd was a well-known church musician and brought to the writing of these madrigals not only the methods of church music, but a fondness for serious and moral lyrics. In the choice of words for his songs he showed excellent literary taste; many of them reappeared as poems in *England's Helicon*. The madrigals, which were thirty-five in number, and written for five voices, had the characteristic shortness of their form. Some of the poems fitted to them, however, are rather long. Byrd makes the best of the matter by using half the poem for one madrigal and half for another. A poem so treated is Sir Edward Dyer's "My mind to me a kingdom is."³ This lyric, together with the praise of a quiet life already noticed in *England's Helicon*, "What pleasures have great princes,"⁴ is

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

typical of the subject-matter which Byrd chose for his songs. His literary ideals were always those of the miscellanies; his last publication in 1611 shows little influence of the more cheerful kind of lyric then fashionable. In one song, "Farewell, false love! the oracle of lies!"¹ he uses the work of Thomas Deloney, the most celebrated popular street-ballad writer of the period. But most curious of all, as showing the utter independence of meter and musical rhythm in these madrigals, is the setting of eight lines of Ovid's epistle from Penelope to Ulysses, translated with terrible literalness into English hexameters.

In the same year that Byrd published this book of madrigals, set to themes already somewhat old-fashioned, Nicholas Younge published the first part of his *Musica Transalpina*.² This was a collection of fifty-seven popular Italian madrigals, composed for four, five, or six voices, and set to English paraphrases of the original words. In the dedicatory epistle, Younge explains that many of his friends who delighted in the new Italian music were nevertheless hindered in its use by the Italian poems to which they were set. One ingenious musician, however, paraphrased some of the songs with such symmetry that the English version answered syllable for syllable to the original; so that the performance of the music — evidently the translator's only concern — was not disturbed.

¹ *Musa Madrigalesca*, p. 12.

² *Ibid.*, p. 38.

Younge saw the practical value of such literary tinkering, and published this first collection. The name of the translator or paraphraser has not been discovered.

The literary quality of these songs is wretched. In the attempt to preserve the original meter, and especially the Italian feminine rhymes, the translator turned out one monstrosity after another. One song opens in the original with the verses: —

“Io morirò d’ amore ;
S’ al mio scampo non vien sdegno e furore.”

This movement reappears in English: —

“I will go die of pure love ;
Except rage and disdain come to recure love ;”¹

The value of the book, however, is that it familiarized musicians and poets alike with the advantages of the short Italian songs for this kind of music. The literary value of the Italian originals was but slight, and the English lyrists needed but acquaintance with the model in order to surpass it.

In 1589 Byrd published his second book, *Songs of Sundry Natures*.² This was a collection of forty-seven madrigals, for three, four, five, or six parts. In his address to the reader, the composer bears witness to the sudden popularity of madrigal music: “Finding that my last impression of Musicke (most gentle reader) through thy courtesie and favour, hath had good passage and utterance ;

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

and that since the publishing thereof, the exercise and love of that art hath exceedingly increased; I have been encouraged thereby," etc.¹

The lyrics in this book are of the same general moral tendency as in Byrd's first publication. The number of love-songs, however, is on the increase. Perhaps the change is due to the influence of such subjects in *Musica Transalpina*, of the year before. Byrd is still embarrassed by the length of his poems. In one case he uses but the first quatrain of a sonnet,² of which the remainder was afterward set by Thomas Bateson. The one lyric in the volume that has taken a high place among the songs of this period is the pastoral dialogue between a shepherd and his friend:—

"A. Who made thee, Hob, forsake the plough
And fall in love ?

B. Sweet beauty, which hath power to bow
The Gods above, etc." ³

In 1590 Thomas Watson, the author of the *Hekatompathia*, published a volume of Italian madrigals with English translations. The same fidelity to the music rather than to the words, which has been noticed in *Musica Transalpina*, is here announced in the title, *Italian Madrigals Englished, not to the sense of the original ditty, but after the affection of the note*.⁴ This was a small collection of only twenty-eight madrigals. Besides the paraphrases from the

¹ *Musa Madrigalesca*, p. 21.

² *Ibid.*, p. 29.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

Italian, it contained several adaptations of English words to the music. The paraphrases are very poor; their only interest is in the short madrigal form which they are forced by the music to adopt. The original English adaptations are a little better, but they are strangely inferior in technic to Watson's sonnets. Perhaps the demands of the music hampered him. The only interest of these original pieces is in their occasional reference to contemporary events, as in the verse on the death of Sir Francis Walsingham, Sidney's father-in-law:—

“The Fates, alas! too cruel,
Have slain before his day Diana's chiefest jewel.
But worthy Melibœus in a moment,
With Astrophel is placed above the firmament.
Oh! they both live in pleasure
Where joys exceed all measure.”¹

In 1593 appeared Thomas Morley's *Canzonets, or Little Short Songs to Three Voices*. This is a small collection of twenty madrigals. Morley was a pupil of Byrd, and enjoyed a wide reputation as a scholarly musician. With his own profession he is best known for a treatise on music. The lyrics in his first song-book are generally short, of the madrigal type. They are very interesting as illustrating two directions in which the literary madrigal was developed by the English poets. On the one hand it lent itself to idyllic treatment; it tended to express a single exquisite picture, finished like a cameo,

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

whose subject, originally a pastoral incident, in time was taken from any region of life. In Morley's book the transition to this form is well illustrated by the madrigal:—

“ See, see, mine own sweet jewell,
What I have for my darling ;
A robin redbreast and a starling ;
Both these I give in hope to move thee !
And yet thou sayest, I do not love thee ! ”¹

The other tendency of the madrigal was toward epigram. Perhaps because of Wyatt's example in *Tottel's Miscellany*, short lyrics in the Elizabethan period were often touched with the epigrammatic quality. The madrigal, ending like the English sonnet, in a couplet, offered every temptation to this intellectual mannerism. An example from Morley shows this tendency in its beginning:—

“ Do you not know how Love first lost his seeing ;
Because with me once gazing
On those fair eyes, where all powers have their being ;
She with her beauty blazing,
Which death might have revived,
Him of his sight, me of my heart deprived.”²

In 1594 Morley published his second book, *Madrigals to Four Voices*. This collection, also, contained twenty madrigals. The epigrammatic development of the form is illustrated by several examples, but the book as a whole is interesting for two other kinds of song. The first is an imitation of the old

¹ *Musa Madrigalesca*, p. 65.

² *Ibid.*, p. 68.

French *romances*, short pastorals enclosing a lyric.
A fair example would be:—

“ In dew of roses steeping
Her lovely cheeks, Lycoris sat a weeping.
Ah Doris false ! thou hast my heart bereft me,
And now unkind hast left me.
Hear me, alas ! cannot my beauty move thee ?
Pity me then, because I love thee.
Ah me ! thou scorn’st, the more I pray thee ;
And this thou doest all to slay me ;
Kill me then, cruel, kill and vaunt thee,
But my dreary ghost shall haunt thee.”¹

Several lyrics of this class in *England’s Helicon* are quoted from Morley’s book. It is fairly plain that the pastoral element in the illustration is derived from the decorative, elaborate conventions of romances like the *Arcadia*. The very name of the shepherdess becomes characteristic of these highly conventional idyls, as it already was of the prose pastoral.

The other class of lyrics in this volume that have the interest of novelty are the descriptions of dances. They are not properly lyrics, either in quality or in form ; their purpose is to portray a dancing scene. Some examples are purely conventional—pastoral backgrounds with shepherds and shepherdesses treading graceful measures. But there are also realistic pictures, as in the curious description of the Morris dance:—

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

"Ho! who comes there with bagpiping and drumming?
O, 'tis, I see, the Morris dance a coming.

* * * * *

Soft, not away so fast; dost see they melt them;
Out there, stand out; you come too far (I say) in,
And give the hobby-horse more room to play in."¹

This song of the dance brings us naturally to Morley's third book, published in 1595, *Ballets to Five Voices*. The twenty-one madrigals here collected have Italian words with English translations and paraphrases. Almost all have a dance refrain, "Fa la, la," and their themes deal largely with the season of spring and the joy of life. Many of them, such as the familiar,—

"Now is the month of Maying,
When merry lads are playing,"²

have a far higher literary value than the lyrics of the preceding books. The best poem is Lodge's graceful song, noticed before:—

"My bonny lass, thine eye
So sly,
Hath made me sorrow so."³

Most of these dance-songs, however, have a narrative introduction; no matter how short they are, they incline to be idyls with an inserted lyric. They have the intaglio quality of the idyllic madrigal, a reminder of the clear beauty found in the poems of the Greek Anthology. A good example is the song:—

¹ *Musa Madrigalesca*, p. 79.

² *Ibid.*, p. 86.

³ *English Madrigals*, F. A. Cox, 1899, p. 98.

"Singing alone sat my sweet Amaryllis,
The satyrs danced all with joy surprised;
Was never yet such dainty sport devised.

Fa la, la.

Come, love, again, sang she, to thy beloved;
Alas! what fear'st thou? Will I not perséver?
Yes, thou art mine, and I am thine forever.

Fa la, la."¹

Morley's *Canzonets to Two Voices*, published 1595, contains but twelve songs, and they are too poor in quality to deserve comment. The words are paraphrases from the Italian, and Oliphant accused Morley of plagiarizing the music.² His *Canzonets, or Little Short Aers*, two years later, are much better. The lyrics consist of epigrammatic madrigals and of ornate love-pastorals. In one case the humorous epigram appears; the illustration has no literary value, but it marks a new and important treatment of the madrigal:—

"Love's folk in green arraying,
At Barley-break were playing,
Laura in Hell was caught,
Then O how Dorus laught!
And said, good mistress, sith you
Will needs thither, have with you."³

The other songs illustrate decorative treatment of the madrigal; in one, the old motive of the lover's sorrow in springtime is presented with great luxury of phrase.

In the same year, 1597, George Kirbye published

¹ *Musa Madrigalesca*, p. 88. ² *Ibid.*, p. 93. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

a set of twenty-four madrigals. This collection is of rather ordinary literary merit, but it contains a setting of two stanzas of the dirge in Spenser's Eleventh Eclogue.¹ The character of the words seems to have been more or less unimportant to the madrigal composer, so long as they were of the right length. From this time on quotations from successful poems are frequently used as substitutes for the true madrigal form. Of course, where the quotation is from a long lyric, as in this case, and where each stanza is set as a separate madrigal, all sense of lyric form is lost. The other songs in this volume are of the short epigrammatic type.

In this year appeared the second part of *Musica Transalpina*, edited by Nicholas Younge. This collection of twenty-four madrigals has some very interesting songs. The best is probably the description of a "dark lady," which in its choice of complexions follows Shakspeare and the sonneteers. It is very close to the example already quoted from Theocritus:—

"Brown is my love, but graceful;
And each renowned whiteness
Matched with her lovely brown, loseth its brightness.
Fair is my love, but scornful;
Yet have I seen despised
Dainty white lilies, and sad flowers well prized."²

The other madrigals are of the same ornate Italian style. The translations from the original versions

¹ *Musa Madrigalesca*, p. 310.

² *Ibid.*, p. 54.

show considerable sympathy with this pseudo-pastoral mood if not with the literal themes. The song, "So saith my fair and beautiful Lycoris,"¹ illustrates them all. One madrigal, however, a drinking-song, seems to be an original English composition. As one of the first examples of the theme, it claims a moment's attention. It is the personal expression of one man's love of drink, instead of the choral bacchanalian lyric found in the drama. The singer tells how his eyes have become affected from much liquor. The doctor has evidently prescribed total abstinence, but the patient is firm:—

"Mine eyes shall not be my commanders,
For I maintain and ever shall;
Better the windows bide the dangers,
Than to spoil the house and all." ²

In 1597 also appeared the first book of one of the greatest madrigal composers, Thomas Weelkes. This collection contained the song, "My flocks feed not," republished in the *Passionate Pilgrim* and attributed to Shakspeare. Each of the three stanzas was set as a separate madrigal. Two other madrigals contain descriptions of the Morris dance, such as we have noticed before; the rest are on moral themes, or continue the ornate development of the madrigal form. In one example Cupid is overcome at sight of the matchless Chloris; in

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

² *Ibid.*, p. 55.

another the lily cheeks of Phillis are blamed for the poet's love misery.

The most important song-book of the year was John Dowland's *First Book of Songs or Aires*. This contained twenty-one songs for four voices, with an optional accompaniment for the lute. The significance of the book in the history of Elizabethan song-writing is very great, but it can hardly be appreciated without some knowledge of its musical importance. As has been noticed, the madrigal-form marked the first step in the secularization of church music. With the secular words, the strict rules of ecclesiastical composition at first remained in force. But two strong influences were at work during this madrigal period, tending to substitute for the contrapuntal movement a clear-cut rhythm. The first of these influences was the English popular song.¹ In its uncultivated state, illustrated by the tunes mentioned in the miscellanies, this native music was a simple melody, unaccompanied, principally characterized by strong rhythm. The people who cared for such tunes probably would not appreciate the scholastic music of the madrigal, and undoubtedly the educated musicians scorned the common melodies. Both classes, however, would hear just such tunes whenever a song was rendered at the theatre; for as we shall see, in the matter of lyrics the Elizabethan stage appealed directly to the native English genius.

¹ *Oxford History of Music*, iii. p. 12.

As the great dramatic period advanced, the popular music under its patronage came to be a powerful influence.

At the other end of society, among the cultivated musicians themselves, a similar effect was achieved by the favorite musical instrument, the lute.¹ Passages of contrapuntal nature, calling for several voices, could not be rendered on a lute; its performances were limited to melodies and chords—the material of modern music. So long as the madrigal was strictly written, it had to be sung unaccompanied. Meanwhile the lute-music became more and more free from the rules, as the lutanists came to realize the needs of their instrument. Dowland was the greatest lutanist of his day; it was but natural that he should write his songs with reference to lute accompaniment, and therefore with disregard of the madrigal form. The result was a melody clearly defined, with the other voices subordinated, and with an accompaniment of rhythmic chords on the lute. Sometimes, as in this first volume of Dowland's, the songs were so written that the principal part or melody might be sung as a solo. In that case the other voices were supplied by a lute or by some combination of string instruments. These departures from the strict madrigal form were received with favor by the general public, but for a long time the scholarly musicians spoke of them with little respect. To distinguish

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

them from the classic forms, even when written for four or five voices, they called them *Ayres*. When we reach Rossiter's book of 1601, we shall find many significant phrases in the preface. The author, probably Campion, admits, as a good musician should, the superiority of madrigal music; "as in poesy we give the preëminence to the Heroical poem; so in music, we yield the chief place to the grave and well-invented Motet." Yet an appeal has been made just before, not to the scholars, but to the people: "For the note and tableture, if they satisfy the most, we have our desire; let expert masters please themselves with better."¹

This preface begins with a significant definition of *airs*: "What epigrams are in poetry, the same are airs in music; then in their chief perfection when they are short and well seasoned." This epigrammatic briefness in the new music wrought an important change in the words. It has been noticed already that the madrigal, because of constant repetition of the musical phrases, called for only a short lyric. Much of such contrapuntal effect, however, was now discarded in the airs, and there was nothing left but the melody. This was often too short for use if sung only once, so the composer arranged to repeat it to the other stanzas of the lyric. This repetition, contrary to the madrigal in effect, immediately encouraged the composition of songs three or four stanzas in length.

¹ *Works of Thomas Campion*, A. H. Bullen, 1889, p. 5.

With this lengthening of the songs came the typical and famous lyric-writing of the period. For its proper development the lyric needed more room than could be found in the ten-line madrigal or the eight-line *rispetto*. But the typical length of the airs, twenty or thirty lines, answered exactly to the genius of the best song-writers, like Campion; and later it furnished a literary, though no longer a musical, model for Herrick.

The lyrics in Dowland's first book are interesting as bearing out these general statements. The parting-song, "Now, O now I needs must part,"¹ contains seven quatrains, and the other pieces are long in proportion. Peele's famous song from *Polyhymnia*, "His golden locks time hath to silver turned,"² is set to music entire. There are also three lyrics by Fulke Greville, Sidney's friend. The new style of part-song permitted all these lyrics to be set without curtailment. The best of Greville's contributions is probably the song: —

"Away with these self-loving lads
Whom Cupid's arrow never glads!
Away, poor souls, that sigh and weep,
In love of those that lie asleep;
For Cupid is a meadow god
And forceth none to kiss the rod."³

In 1598 Thomas Weelkes published his second book, *Ballets and Madrigals to Five Voices*. His collection consists of dance-songs, all written on

¹ *Musa Madrigalesca*, p. 152.

² *Ibid.*, p. 157.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

the same model. A simple stanza, usually a quatrain, is followed by a refrain of monosyllables, such as "Fa la, la." The themes expressed are but imitations of the perennial dance-motives, — youth, springtime, and love. There is the usual invitation to the dance,¹ and the familiar parting-song, when the pleasure is over.² In one song the despairing poet bids unkind Phillis enjoy herself at the dance; he meanwhile will mourn his broken heart.³ The deepest note struck is the praise of youth, where the joy of life is usually contrasted, in true Renaissance mood, with the dark approach of age: —

"For youth it well beseemeth,
That pleasure he esteemeth;
And sullen age is hated,
That mirth would have abated." ⁴

In the same year appeared John Wilbye's *Madrigals*. Wilbye was one of the best-known masters of the older, severe style of writing, and his book illustrates in music and words the strict form of the madrigal. Probably the best example is the familiar "Lady, when I behold the roses sprouting," a translation from the Italian.⁵ Most of the songs, perhaps because of the strong Italian influence, retain the artificial mood of the ornate pastoral. Chloris and Amaryllis and roses and lilies are still the rimester's stock in trade. But the song-books

¹ *Musa Madrigalesca*, p. 122.

² *Ibid.*, p. 127.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

are by this time made up to please all the tastes of the public, and some of the public seem to have liked moral themes, or at least a touch of contemplative melancholy. The taste is mildly represented here in a song that serves as a link in the long chain between *carpe diem* and "Gather ye roses": —

"Thou art but young, thou say'st,
And love's delight thou weigh'st not;
Oh! take time while thou may'st,
Lest when thou would'st, thou may'st not." ¹

In 1600 Weelkes and Dowland each published a volume of songs, the general character of which is not different from other works of these composers. Dowland, however, had the distinction of presenting here one of the famous pedler-songs of Elizabethan poetry: —

"Fine knacks for ladies; cheap, choice, nice, and new.
Good pennyworths, but money cannot move;
I keep a fair but for the fair to view;
A beggar may be liberal of love.
Though all my wares be trash, my heart is true." ²

The great antiquity of mercers' songs in England has already been noticed in the second chapter. The character of the roving pedler, especially if he were wittily impudent, seems to have appealed strongly to the Elizabethan imagination. In its normal presentation, Shakspeare's *Autolycus* sums up the type. Dowland's pedler, however, is idealized into a second-hand philosopher; every line of

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

² *Ibid.*, p. 165.

his speech, in phrase and thought, is a burlesque echo of the moral verses in the miscellanies.

Weelkes's book also contains one song that is significant, in that it represents the epigrammatic development of the madrigal, which was to produce one of the seventeenth-century types of lyric. This particular song has the restraint and precision usually associated with Herrick. Like many of his shorter pieces, it has little of the Greek lyrical quality; it is better read than sung. Its merits, intellectual rather than emotional, are those of clear thought and exact expression: —

“Three times a day my prayer is,
To gaze my fill on Thoralis;
And three times thrice I daily pray,
Not to offend that sacred May.
But all the year my suit must be
That I may please, and she love me.”¹

In the preceding song-books, approximately from 1588 to 1600, the madrigal form dominated both music and words. The transition from the old style to the new has been noticed in connection with Dowland. From the beginning of the century the new music and the lighter forms of lyrics are in the ascendancy, and the madrigal is superseded largely by the airs. This second period of the song-books is for the literary student most important, because it includes the work of the greatest Elizabethan song-writer, Thomas Campion. In

¹ *Musa Madrigalesca*, p. 133.

1601 he collaborated with Philip Rossiter in the *Booke of Ayres* already noticed. Himself a musician as well as a poet, he composed half the music, and is supposed to have written all the words. From the musical standpoint the book is remarkable because the songs are for solo voices, with an accompaniment of lute, orpharion (a large kind of lute), and bass viol. From the literary standpoint, no other song-book can compare with this for the exquisite perfection of its lyrics. It is largely on Campion's verses that the general high opinion of Elizabethan song is founded, and it is largely from the dainty lilt of his poems that the age gets its reputation for light-hearted music. But no song writer is more independent of musical accompaniment than Campion; his lyrics have a sweetness of word-melody that could not be improved by any setting.

The songs in the first book of airs class themselves easily under several heads. To consider the least important characteristics first, we should begin with the classical influence. It will be remembered that Campion's *Art of English Poesy*, advocating unrimed verse, appeared one year later, in 1602, and already he was evidently experimenting. Besides the Sapphic measure,¹ he has several poems in an irregular rhythm, partly unrimed, which scans badly to English ears. In the following strophe the free line binding the two

¹ *Works*, A. H. Bullen, p. 23.

couplets should be noticed; it is characteristic of Campion's art:—

“ Shall I come, if I swim ? wide are the waves, you see ;
Shall I come, if I fly, my dear Love, to thee ?
Streams Venus will appease ; Cupid gives me wings ;
All the powers assist my desire
Save you alone, that set my woful heart on fire ! ”¹

Campion's classical interest is seen also in translations and paraphrases from the Latin. The best of these is undoubtedly the version of Catullus's *Vivamus, mea Lesbia*.² The ease of phrase and the song-quality of the words show Campion's art to advantage. More characteristic of his classical mood, however, are the Horatian lines, suggestive of *Integer Vitae*:—

“ The man of life upright,
Whose guiltless heart is free
From all dishonest deeds,
Or thought of vanity,” etc.³

Whenever Campion moralizes, he is likely to take this tone, and his theme is almost sure to be praise of the golden mean. This motive had appeared, as we have seen, in the miscellanies, and Campion at times merely carries on the miscellany mood at a higher poetic level. In the song, “ Let him that will be free,”⁴ he advocates the quiet life: put the care of the world away, he says, and learn the art of content. In the preceding poem,

¹ *Works*, p. 34.

² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

he contrasts the trouble of a guilty conscience with the happiness of innocence.¹

These, however, are not the lyrics that make Campion's fame, nor are they a large part of his work. The best examples of his genius are the love-songs, which have the general traits of light rhythm and joyous spirit. A fair illustration is the song in praise of a humble mistress. As Campion treats it, the theme echoes the old contrast between a courtly and a rural life:—

“ I care not for these ladies
That must be wooed and prayed ;
Give me kind Amarillis,
The wanton country maid.
Nature art disdaineth,
Her beauty is her own.
Her when we court and kiss,
She cries, ‘ Forsooth, let go ! ’
But when we come where comfort is,
She never will say ‘ no ! ’ ” ²

Though this is a good example of Campion's lightness of touch, and of his art within the single stanza, yet the song as a whole is not one of his best. Its three strophes, each dealing with a separate phase of a maiden's charms, have each a distinct lyric motive; so that there is no emotional continuity between them, and the poem lacks lyric unity. This is the same fault, on a smaller scale, that was found with Spenser's *Epithalamium*. Campion develops this idyllic method into a dis-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

tinct kind of song, of which the best illustration is Carew's "Ask me no more." He takes some one theme, announces it in the first lines, and then restates it in the succeeding stanzas, each time in a different image. Unity is secured by the treatment of one theme, but the organic form is wanting; the order of the stanzas is of no consequence and their number is optional. In one poem Campion describes his mistress's face as a garden, a morning, a meadow, as heaven, death, youth, and spring:—

"And would you see my mistress's face?
It is a flowery garden place,
Where knots of beauties have such grace
That all is work and nowhere space.

It is a sweet delicious morn,
Where day is breeding, never born;
It is a meadow, yet unshorn,
Which thousand flowers do adorn.

It is the heaven's bright reflex," etc.¹

The same method is employed in two other lyrics in this book, "And would you fain the reason know,"² and "Follow thy fair sun, unhappy shadow!"³

A better example of lyric form, though not a perfect one, is the description of Corinna singing to her lute. The theme is equivalent to the use of musical images in the sonnets—as Corinna sings, the lute-strings sound in sympathy with her voice; so does her lover's heart. A note of arti-

¹ *Works*, p. 27.

² *Ibid.*, p. 31.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

ficiality might have been avoided by making the lute respond to her fingers rather than to her voice. In external form the song breaks into two parts — the presentation of the lute image, and its parallel, the poet's heart. Many of Campion's songs have this twofold arrangement; perhaps here is felt the influence of octave and sextet in sonnet-writing. The charm of such a division is that it presents the idea, not through an emotional development, but through an emotional contrast. There is, however, no emotional cadence at the close; the end of the lyric is recognized intellectually when the parallel is completed. The last half of the song in question is illustrative: —

“ And as her lute doth live or die,
Led by her passion, so must I !
For when of pleasure she doth sing,
My thoughts enjoy a sudden spring ;
But if she doth of sorrow speak,
E'en from my heart the strings do break.”¹

In this book of songs, Campion addresses many different mistresses, Corinna, Lesbia, Amaryllis, Laura, etc. The habit is Horatian, and no doubt Campion owed it to his knowledge of the Roman poet, but his audience had become familiar with it through the ornate madrigals of preceding song-books. The names and the formula both reappear in Herrick.

Campion's work so dominates this period, that

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

it is an advantage to consider it all at once. About 1613 he published his *Two Books of Ayres*. The first book was devoted to "divine and moral songs"; the second to "light conceits of lovers." Campion was the author of both words and music. One or two sentences in his preface throw interesting light on the musical progress of song-writing. He has a rebuke for those who still prefer the strict Italian madrigal: "Some there are who admit only French and Italian airs; as if every country had not his proper air, which the people thereof naturally usurp in their music."¹ His own music, following the new fashion, was intended for a solo voice with instrumental accompaniment: "These airs were for the most part framed at first for one voice with the lute or viol; but upon occasion they have since been filled with more parts, which whoso please may use, who like not may leave."² Campion, then, represents in this book practically modern song-writing; from the opposite point of view, he represents the close of the strictly Elizabethan lyric period.

In the "divine and moral songs," the imitation of *Integer Vitæ*, "The man of life upright," is reprinted, setting the tone for its companion lyrics. The religious songs, with one exception, are conventional and indefinite; whatever emotion there is falls short of the fervid imagination of a Vaughan or a Crashaw, and finds sufficient outlet in well-

¹ *Works*, p. 45.

² *Ibid.*, p. 44.

worn phrases. The exception to this criticism is the poem : —

“ View me, Lord, a work of Thine ;
Shall I then lie drowned in night ?
Might thy grace in me but shine,
I should seem made all of light.”¹

This lyric motive is carefully developed; the poet's soul is darkened with sin; if once it may see God, it will dwell in light. The lyric ends in the contemplation of this heavenly light.

At the end of these sober poems is printed a realistic idyl of low life, “Jack and Joan they think no ill.”² The daily cares and joys of the farmer and his wife are told with minute details : —

“ Well can they judge of nappy ale,
And tell at large a winter tale ;
Climb up to the apple loft,
And turn the crabs till they are soft.”

The last stanza is a kind of envoy, addressed to “courtly dames and knights.” The poet asks them what they enjoy more valuable than the security and peace of this simple couple. The lyric consciously ranks itself with the familiar praises of country life.

Among the “light conceits of lovers” there are many successful lyrics. In their epigrammatic lightness, some of them anticipate the cavalier songs, which followed them half a century later. The poem, “There is none, O none but you,”³ illustrates

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

² *Ibid.*, p. 61.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

this new manner as applied to an old theme. The poet sings that nothing keeps him from sight of his mistress but she herself; she is cruel to hide from him; had he but sufficient opportunity to see her, he would make her immortal in his songs. The "eternizing" motive is here worded with a prettiness that seems a generation away from Shakspeare's passionate mood:—

"Sweet, afford me then your sight,
That, surveying all your looks,
Endless volumes I might write
And fill the world with envied books :

Which when after-ages view,
All shall wonder and despair,
Woman to find man so true,
And man a woman half so fair."

Probably the best lyric in the book is the poem "Give beauty all her right." Not only does it answer the requirements of strict lyric-form, but it has an additional interest on account of its intellectual motive. These songs usually find their stimulus in a situation or a picture; here the stimulus is the proposition that beauty has no absolute standard. The method of the poet is to narrow his theme gradually until it points a compliment to his mistress. The first step is to illustrate the general proposition by the varieties of woman's beauty:—

"Helen, I grant, might pleasing be ;
And Rosamond was as sweet as she.¹"

¹ *Works*, p. 71.

Differences in features are not important; some men like a bright eye, some like a pale face; many a plain flower is plucked with the rose. Then, as a last step, the poet sings that differences of country or of times are not important, and through the conception of eternal beauty he comes to his point: —

“Free beauty is not bound
To one unmoved clime;
She visits every ground,
And favors every time.
Let the old loves with mine compare,
My Sovereign is as sweet and fair.”¹

Campion's *Third and Fourth Booke of Ayres* was published about 1617. Its contents sustain the general level of his art, and need here but an illustration or two. The cavalier mood is represented by several poems, all slight in theme but graceful and epigrammatic. A good example is the lyric beginning: —

“‘Maids are simple,’ some men say,
‘They, forsooth, will trust no men.’
But should they men's wills obey,
Maids were very simple then.”²

The poet continues by exposing the lack of truth in lovers. This song, like many others in this last book of Campion's, is little more than a string of epigrams, each stanza ending with a snap. One reason for it may be the general epigrammatic tendency of the Elizabethan period, from Wyatt on.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

² *Ibid.*, p. 91.

A special explanation may be the form in which the songs were rendered. The music was repeated with each stanza, and as the end of the tune naturally called for a climax, the poet was tempted to make the effect by his wit. The result is a certain intellectual charm in every stanza, but the fundamental emotional unity of the lyric is lacking.

This book of airs contains what is perhaps Campion's most charming song:—

“There is a garden in her face,
Where roses and white lilies grow ;¹

The unity of the poem is secured by the refrain describing her lips — “Cherry ripe.” Each stanza pictures some feature of the lady's beauty, but always in relation to her lips. In some respects the song represents the highest skill of the madrigal writers; its theme is extremely slight, but its effect is one of richness without superfluity and of sweetness without lack of force:—

“Her eyes like angels watch them still ;
Her brows like bended bows do stand,
Threatening with piercing frowns to kill
All that attempt, with eye or hand,
Those sacred cherries to come nigh
Till ‘Cherry ripe’ themselves do cry.”

Returning to a chronological review of the other important song-books, we should mention the *Triumphs of Oriana*,² edited by Thomas Morley in 1601. This was a series of madrigals by different

¹ *Works*, p. 117.

² *Musa Madrigalesca*, p. 106.

composers in honor of some woman. There is little doubt that this woman was Queen Elizabeth, and the collection resolves itself into another such piece of flattery as Sir John Davies's *Astræa*. The publication was important in the musical history of the madrigal, but its literary value is small. The songs were so constructed that each ended in the refrain, "Long live fair Oriana." The themes were various, but always related to the ornate pastoral mood.

In 1604 Michael Este published a set of part-songs. It contained one of the best known Elizabethan lyrics, Nicholas Breton's "In the merry month of May."¹ In form this poem corresponds exactly to the old French *romance*. The poet, strolling in the fields, overhears a dispute between the shepherd and his love. She doubts the truth of his passion, and he pleads for her favor; then, after making him pledge his love in sacred oaths, she accepts his kisses, and is made Lady of the May. The song was written before 1591, and is said to have been a favorite with Queen Elizabeth.

In 1608 appeared Weelkes's last book, *Ayres or Phantasticke Spirites*, a collection of humorous and satiric songs. In its subject-matter it marked a new fashion, which continued for the next three or four years. The best lyric in the book is the extremely vigorous satire on insincerity and flattery:—

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

“Ha ha ha ha ! This world doth pass
Most merrily, I'll be sworn ;
For many an honest Indian ass
Goes for an Unicorn.
Farra diddle dino ;
This is idle fino.

Ty hye, ty hye ! O sweet delight !
He tickles this age that can
Call Tullia's ape a Marmasyte,
And Leda's goose a swan, etc.”¹

In 1609 the tone set by Weelkes's book was emphasized more strongly in *Pammelia*, a collection of catches. The most significant thing in it is the sub-title, “To the well-disposed to read, and to the merry disposed to sing.” The song-books had evidently come to be recognized for their literary qualities. These particular lyrics, however, were better sung than read. The verses are short, as befits rounds and catches, and the themes are bacchanalian; as, for example:—

“Banbury ale !
Where, where, where ?
At the blacksmith's house :
I would I were there.”²

This comic tradition was continued in the publications *Deuteromelia*, of this same year, and *Melismata*, 1611. The latter is remarkable for one famous song, “There were three ravens sat on a tree.”³ This romantic little narrative has almost

¹ *Musa Madrigalesca*, p. 140.

² *Ibid.*, p. 253.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

an epic dignity, and it undoubtedly is very old. In these last publications the traditional rimes of the people seem to have been drawn on for material.

This brief survey of the chief song-books, from 1588 to 1616, indicates at least the two classes into which the songs fall — madrigals and “ayres.” It will be seen that the length of the lyrics was largely determined in each period by the needs of the music. At the same time it will be seen that the artistic quality of the words and of the music was quite distinct; the words maintain a lightness and speed, not with the help of the music, but in spite of it. The fact that from the recognized musical qualities of these songs men have ascribed to them a setting far daintier than they really had, tends to prove the assertion made in the first chapter, that verse, when it attains great verbal melody, parts company with music, and can best be appreciated alone.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LYRIC IN THE DRAMA

To understand the part played by the lyric in the Elizabethan drama, it is necessary to go back to the beginnings of the drama itself. The first religious plays were lyrical in quality, but their structure was narrative; in this respect, if we disregard the fact that they were acted, they answer very closely to the English popular ballad. But though the general quality of the narrative is lyrical, there are few lyrics. A passage here and there, which might be considered by itself, or a lyric transcribed from the Bible, such as the *Nunc dimittis* sung in the *Presentation of Christ*,¹ is all that the early plays can show in the way of song. These transcriptions from Biblical lyrics are taken over with the narrative situation, and the passages that by themselves might be considered lyrics, are usually connected as closely with the purpose of the narrative. A good example is the chorus sung by the burgesses at Christ's entry into Jerusalem:—

¹ *Digby Mysteries. Shakspeare Soc., series 7, p. 20.*

"Hayll! prophette, preved withouten pere,
 Hayll! prince of pees schall evere endure,
 Hayll! kyng comely, curteyse and clere,
 Hayll! soverayne semely to synfull sure,
 To thee all bowes.
 Hayll! lord lovely, oure cares may cure,
 Hayll King of Jewes."¹

Seven other stanzas follow, all beginning with the same word and adding epithets of praise.

It is not remarkable that, with such a close relation to the religious themes, the lyrics should resemble recognized types of Middle English religious song. The acted drama gives the poet an opportunity for realizing his conventional lyric situation. For example, the familiar motive of the Virgin's slumber-song is put, with a slight variation, into the Coventry play of Christ's birth.³ In the same way the music of the first songs in the drama was church music. In the manuscripts of the York and the Coventry Mysteries, the music preserved is evidently that of bits of the church service, adapted for use on account of their familiarity. Of course in the fourteenth century and at the earlier, uncertain date, when the first of the mysteries were composed, the music of the church was the standard for that art, and it would not be remarkable, in any circumstances, that the songs in the plays should be set to it. But immediately a contrast becomes visible between the severe style of the music

¹ *York Mystery Plays*, L. Toulman Smith, 1885, p. 216.

² *Coventry Mysteries*, Thomas Sharpe, 1825, p. 112.

and the popular rhythms of the words, which shows how quickly the lyrical parts of the drama gravitated toward the people's taste.

The second stage of the development of the lyric in the drama is reached when the lyrical parts are clearly defined and separated from the narrative. The song, then, however related in mood to the dramatic theme, is ornamental rather than necessary. With the first example of a lyric in this relation to the drama, the real history of Elizabethan dramatic songs begins. So long as the lyric was a part of the narrative, it was obliged to treat religious themes. But in its ornamental character, it had a natural place in those comic scenes which, portraying human character realistically, afforded realistic motives for song. These comic scenes, such as the episode of Mak, the sheep-stealer,¹ appealed directly to the English nature; and the first ornamental songs, embodied in such scenes, appealed no less directly to the common taste of the people. This remains the characteristic of the songs in Elizabethan plays. No matter how Italianate the dramatic theme might be, no matter with what skill the author adapted it to his English uses, the interpolated songs appealed strictly through their own merits; and the only lyric merits that even Shakspeare's audience as a whole could appreciate were English

¹ *The Townely Plays*, in the *Early English Text Soc.*, extra series lxxi, 1897, p. 122 sq.

qualities. The result is that throughout the drama we look in vain for a madrigal; the groundlings would no more have understood this complicated form than an ode of Pindar. But what they could understand was the drinking-song in the Chester Plays, sung by Noah's wife, just before she entered the ark:—

“The flude comes fleetinge in full faste,
One every syde that spreades full farre;
For fear of drowninge I am agaste;
Good gossippes, lett us drawe nere,
And lett us drinke or we departe
For ofte tymes we have done soe;
For att a draughte thou drinkes a quarte,
And so will I do or I go.”¹

It is hardly necessary to call attention to the vigor and speed of these verses. They contrast sharply with the more complicated and less certain rhythms in which the rest of the play is written. As it has been conjectured that the comic scenes were sometimes borrowed from the professional repertory of strolling actors, so it is not difficult to believe that this drinking-song had long been heard in taverns, or was an imitation of some well-tried lyric.

The vigorous rhythm here first seen reacted even upon the conservative religious songs. In the lullaby already mentioned, from the Coventry play

¹ *English Miracle Plays*, Alfred W. Pollard, Oxford, 1890, p. 15.

of Christ's birth, there is an echo of the drinking-song movement: —

“ O sisters too how may we do
For to preserve this day
This pore yonglinge for whom we do singe
By by lully lullay.
Herod the king in his raging
Chargid he hath this day
His men of might in his own sight
All yonge children to slay.”¹

The music to this song is of the severe church character; the words, however, already show the compromise with popular rhythms. It illustrates the dramatic law of the pressure of the audience upon the playwright.

It is well to notice here another pressure on the playwright, which encouraged the use of songs. In the English troupes many of the actors doubtless had musical training. A large number of them first made their acquaintance with the drama as choir-boys. It will be remembered that Lyly's plays were all written for the boys of St. Paul's or of the Chapel Royal. It is a truism of the stage that the playwright or the manager will find a use for all the accomplishments of the actor. With a number of singers in the company, then, there was a constant pressure on the dramatist or the manager to insert songs.

In the early mysteries the only example of the Middle English love-song is in the Digby series on

¹ *Coventry Mysteries*, Sharpe, p. 112.

the story of Mary Magdalene. Mary, while still unredeemed from her sins, is waiting for her lovers:—

“A ! God be with my valentyne,
My byrd swetyng, my lovys so dere
For they be bote for a blossom of blysse ;
Me marvellyt sore they be not here,” etc.¹

The simple, swift rhythm shows itself here also, where the poet might easily have taken the usual complicated stanza of such love-plaints.

The chief characteristic, then, which comes to the Elizabethan songs from the mysteries, is the direct appeal to the people's tastes, shown by the use of popular lyric themes, as in the case of the drinking-song, or more often by the use of popular rhythms. In the next stage of the drama, the moralities, a new Elizabethan trait is developed. In these plays the devil and the vice become stock characters, and a disposition manifests itself to assign to them a conventional rhythm. The devil makes his entry on most occasions with a comic bluster and noise, and then frequently drops into a meter of short staccato lines. A good example is this passage from the *Morality of Wisdom*:—

“Out herrowe I rore,
Ffor envy I lore
My place to restore,
God hath made this man.
All come thei not thore
Worde and thei wore,
I shall tempt hem so sore,
Ffor I am he that sin beganne, etc.”²

¹ *Shakspeare Soc. Publications*, vii. p. 76.

² *Ibid.*, p. 150.

Short lines are frequently assigned to all supernatural beings of an evil character; in one passage, to Death, in *Everyman*, and to the allegorical figure of Voluptas, in the *Castle of Perseverance*: —

“ Trostyly,
Lord, redy !
Je vous pry
Syr, I say.
In lyckynge and lust
He shall rust,
Tyl dethys dust
Do him to clay.”¹

It will be interesting to compare this early habit with the use of short lines for witches' and fairies' speeches through the Elizabethan drama. The idea of incantation seems to cling to the words of supernatural beings, and the mystery of the incantation seems to be helped by the brief, sometimes unintelligible, phrases.

The period of transition in the drama between the moralities and the first plays of the university wits, about 1590, is a period of apparent uncertainty for the lyric. It is in this period that the first imitations of Seneca appear, introducing the classic chorus to comment on the action and to explain it. The historian of the English drama, however, here makes a sharp distinction between the popular or acted, and the academic or unacted, play. Though the imitations of the classic drama that are preserved amount to a respectable number as com-

¹ Pollard, p. 71.

pared with the unliterary plays that we know of, their influence on the stage was infinitely less; one play publicly performed is more influential than a dozen kept in print, or performed only before academic audiences. The same distinction must be made by the historian of the English lyric. The classic chorus in England is interesting as a literary revival, but its appearance was limited to an academic stage. The real English drama never for a moment diverged from the use of English songs.

Ralph Roister Doister, about 1550,¹ was a college play, but in its dramatic quality it is thoroughly unacademic. It was really acted. Its songs, set probably to existing popular tunes, make their appeal to an English audience. The song of the maids, Margerie, Tibet, and Annot, is the most elaborate in structure, but it lacks a definite theme. Apparently it is an excuse for a stage picture. The maids, while at their work, sing four stanzas, and in between Tibet makes off-hand comments. One stanza is enough to illustrate the doggerel nature of the verses:—

“Pipe mery Annot, etc.

Trilla, Trilla, Trillarie,

Worke Tibet, worke Annot, worke Margerie.

Sewe Tibet, knitte Annot, spinne Margerie.

Let us see who shall winne the victorie.”²

¹ Perhaps the date should be earlier, between 1534 and 1541. For an admirable discussion of this point, see the essay by Professor Ewald Flügel, in *Representative English Comedies*, Charles Mills Gayley, New York, 1903, p. 95.

² Arber Reprint, 1899, p. 22.

The second song has more vigor and better form. It shows its indebtedness to the mysteries and moralities by its stanza, a favorite rime-scheme with them, and it suggests, by its moralizing theme, the gnostic poems of the miscellanies. Without being at all inspired, however, it has the true movement of song; its theme is treated with perfect unity and conciseness, and the refrain of each stanza contributes a certain lightness and force. The first of the four stanzas is a fair illustration:—

“A thing very fitte
For them that have witte,
And are felowes knitte
Servants in one house to bee,
Is faste for to sitte
And not oft to flitte
Nor varie a whitte,
But lovingly to agree.”¹

The best song in the book is Ralph Roister Doister's jingle, “I mun be married a Sunday.” In subject it hardly rises above the dignity of nonsense verse, but its rhythm and general lyric movement are contagious. Like the preceding song it has a refrain, but uses it with far more effect. In fact the refrain is here the backbone of the whole poem. The significance of the lyric is in its popular quality, and in the intention to please the audience with which it was evidently written. Its early date in the development of drama songs is

¹ Arber Reprint, p. 36.

shown by its narrative element; though purely decorative, it is linked in theme with the story of the play. Its slightly humorous quality, as well as its narrative flavor, is illustrated by the third stanza:—

“Christian Custance have I founde,
Christian Custance have I founde,
A Wydowe worthe a thousande pounce,
I mun be married a Sunday.”¹

To the year 1555 is assigned *Lusty Juventus*, one of the late moralities. The subject, the desires and temptations of youth, gave opportunity for two songs expressive of this romantic spirit. Neither song is to any degree coherent; the refrain of the first has always been an enigma:—

“Why should not youth fulfill his own mind,
As the course of nature doth him bind?
Is not everything ordained to do his kind?
Report me to you, report me to you.”²

But whatever be their qualities in detail, these songs breathe the very spirit of youthful joy and life. In the second lyric, “In an harbour green, asleep whereas I lay,”³—the better known of the two,—this Renaissance note is struck with great sweetness. The song stands midway between the old poetry and the new, and it has qualities of both. The mediæval convention of a dream is used to introduce the theme; the stanza is of a pattern well

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

² Dodsley, *Old Plays*, Hazlitt, ii., 1874, p. 88.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

known in the mysteries and in Middle English love-poetry. On the other hand, the lightness of movement and the Renaissance mingling of aspiration with a certain tone of regret, are very notable in so early a lyric. Few of Wyatt's poems are more song-like.

In 1560 *Gorboduc* was acted by amateurs, probably not more than once. This tragedy contains several choruses of the classic kind already mentioned, whose purpose is to explain or moralize upon the dramatic subject. In this moralizing is found their only connection with the English lyric of the time. In other respects these choruses appear strange and superfluous, and contrast strongly with the English dramatic lyric in not being sung. An illustration of their general tone and skilful versification is the following stanza from the fourth act:—

“Blood asketh blood, and death must death requite;
Jove by his just and everlasting dome
Justly hath ever so requited it.
This times before record, and times to come
Shall find it true, and so doth present proof
Present before our eyes for our behoofe.”¹

In Bishop Still's *Gammer Gurton's Needle*,² 1566, an acted play, we find one of the best drinking-

¹ Dodsley's *Old Plays*, i. p. 150.

² The authorship of this play is uncertain, and recent historians are inclined to ascribe it to William Stevenson rather than to Dr. John Still. See the essay by Henry Bradley, in *Representative English Comedies*, Charles Mills Gayley, New York, 1903, p. 199.

songs in all literature. The vigor and effectiveness of the song in the *Noah's Ark* mystery is repeated in far higher degree in "Back and sides go bare."¹ This song is so thoroughly English and popular that it is hardly enough to say that the dramatist was catering to the tastes of his audience; it is much more probable, as many have suggested, that here he borrowed a song directly from the people. The lyric has every appearance of such an origin.

Few better illustrations could be found of certain meanings of the term lyrical. This song is lyrical in the sense that it suggests music, and demands an oral, if not a musical, expression. The strong rhythm and the power of the accent in the line create a constant tendency in the reader to recite it. It is rather remarkable that this musical suggestion is choral; the poet has expressed the effect of many voices. In the portrayal of character the song is subjectively lyrical. The point of view of the singer and of his wife Tib, as to what human happiness consists of, is unmistakable.

But what has made the song so long-lived is probably its happy combination of individual and typical human nature. The singer and his wife are clearly individuals, yet they stand for all the other ale-drinkers, whose voices we hear in the chorus. The details which seem at first sight true to the individual, such as the old toper's complaint of

¹ Bullen, *Lyrics from the Dramatists of the Elizabethan Age*, London, 1901, p. 3.

dyspepsia, are really as properly descriptive of the class. The domestic pictures, also, make their appeal largely because they are typical of a certain kind of home, where animal comfort is the standard:—

“I love no roast but a nutbrown roast,
And a crab laid in the fire ;
A little bread shall do me stead,
Much bread I not desire.
No frost nor snow, no wind, I trow,
Can hurt me if I would,
I am so wrapt and thoroughly lapt
Of jolly good ale and old.”¹

Damon and Pithias, of approximately the same date, belongs to the academic, unacted drama. Its author was Richard Edwards, the miscellany poet, and it is interesting as containing several lyrics of the miscellany type. The subject of the play was such as would induce the sentimental style of writing, and with the miscellany poet sentiment or pathos called for a combination of moralizing and tearing of hair. The result, from the lyric standpoint, is not important. The stage direction, however, for one of the lyrics, throws light on the manner in which the songs were performed. “Here Pithias sings and the regals play.”² The regals were a kind of organ; the actor then sang his part with some kind of harmonized accompaniment.

¹ *Lyrics from the Dramatists of the Elizabethan Age*, p. 4.

² Dodsley, *Old Plays*, Hazlitt, iv. p. 43.

In the *Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntingdon*, there is a pedler's song which seems quite realistic. It answers exactly to the early Norman example already quoted.¹ It is not used by a pedler in the play, but by other characters masquerading as pedlers. In such a situation it would be natural that some familiar formulas of the trade should be recalled. These lines are so like the hawker's cry that they have not even the literary dress of rime:—

“What lack ye? what lack ye?
What is it you will buy?
Any points, pins or laces?
Any laces, points or pins?
Fine gloves, fine glasses, etc.”²

The *Misfortunes of Arthur*, 1587, also of the academic drama, returns to the use of the so-called chorus. After each act the chorus sums up the events, moralizing upon them, and points to the logical result in each case. In the same moral tone is the speech of the Nuntius or messenger at the beginning of each act. This dramatic prefix and suffix serve each the same purpose, and differ only in name. As the action of the tragedy proceeds, however, the chorus becomes more lyrical, and its kinship with miscellany themes is revealed. The chorus at the end of the third act is in praise of the quiet life;³ that after the first scene of the fifth act is on the vicissitudes of fortune.⁴ The

¹ See above, chap. ii. p. 33.

² *Ibid.*, p. 313.

³ Dodsley, *Old Plays*, Hazlitt, viii. p. 161.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 335.

temper of popular literature seems incongruous in the foreign dress of the classic chorus.

The transition period of the lyric from the moralities to the Elizabethan drama ends with John Lyly's *Alexander and Campaspe*, 1584. Lyly's use of the lyric, and the style in which he wrote it, are almost more important than his plays. His writings express the Romance sense of art in all its ornateness and delicacy, and the first conspicuous trait of his lyrics is their advance in richness and fineness of feeling over their more English predecessors. More important, perhaps, is the fact that Lyly's plays were written for the Revels and acted by the choristers of St. Paul's or of the Chapel Royal; he had no English groundlings to entertain. While adopting the English use of the ornamental song, rather than the scholarly chorus, he was free to draw on mythology and literature for his themes, and to treat them with the literary grace of the Italian or French poets.

The effect of this is twofold. So far as Lyly himself is concerned, his songs are lyrical in only a literary sense. They have great verbal melody and rhythm, but they are complete without music—especially without Elizabethan music. The vigorous pulse of popular song does not beat here; the qualities of skilful structure and versification are such as can best be appreciated on the printed page. So far as the drama in general is concerned, however, Lyly's songs had a good influence. They

set an example of regular versification and verbal delicacy such as was unknown before. To state it in other words, while leaving undisturbed the English inspiration of stage-songs, Lyly introduced a literary instead of a popular treatment of the themes. The drama after him supplied English literature, on an average, with much better songs than could be found in any miscellany except Tottel's, or in any song-books except Campion's.

One of Lyly's most successful and typical lyrics appeared in his first play, *Alexander and Campaspe*:—

“Cupid and my Campaspe played
At cards for kisses—Cupid paid, etc.”¹

This poem illustrates the literary, non-musical quality of Lyly's songs. There is in it none of the emotion that music expresses. Lyric ecstasy is supplanted by a contemplative delight in pure beauty. The subject is idyllic, but the unity of the single picture is here represented by the unity of a single episode. When the whole picture is before the reader in its beauty of detail, and in the significance of Campaspe's victory, when she wins Cupid's eyes and leaves him blind—the poet does indeed express a personal reaction against this stimulus:—

“O Love! has she done this to thee?
What shall, alas! become of me?”

¹ Bullen, *Lyrics from the Dramatists of the Elizabethan Age*, p. 5.

But the reader's interest has been awakened in the luxurious little scene between the lady and the god; the poet's emotion counts for almost nothing.

The spring-song in the same play deserves a passing word, because of its use of English bird-images. The connection between the first blossom of the year and the first song of birds is obvious in every literature, but in Elizabethan poetry it received what for English literature is its characteristic expression. In this early example the nightingale, the lark, the robin, and the cuckoo sing in chorus.

Endymion, 1591,¹ contains a fairy song, an illustration of the short meter used for supernatural expression. As might be supposed beforehand, it is the dainty rather than the malignant side of fairy-lore that appeals to Lyly; in his earliest song of this kind we detect a conception hardly less fine than Shakspeare's *Ariel*. This lyric also illustrates one of the earliest combinations of English folk-lore with appreciative literary handling:—

“ Pinch him, pinch him, black and blue,
Saucy mortals must not view
What the queen of stars is doing,
Nor pry into our fairy wooing.
Pinch him blue —
And pinch him black —
Let him not lack
Sharp nails to pinch him blue and red,
Till sleep has rocked his addlehead.” ²

¹ *Lyrics from the Dramatists of the Elizabethan Age*, p. 6.

² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Midas, 1592, contains a description of a woman, such as the romances or the sonnet-series usually include. An ornate description of beauty appealed particularly to Lyly's genius, and this song, "My Daphne's hair is twisted gold,"¹ represents the conventional love-song at its best. Not one of the details of Daphne's beauty but is copied from other literary descriptions, yet the poet makes them all his own by the original charm of his manner. Moreover, the luxury of such descriptions in the romances is here amply counteracted by Lyly's fine taste, and by the idyllic, cameo nature of his lyric genius.

The bacchanalian lyric in *Mother Bombie*, 1594, is in strong contrast to the English drinking-song. The fact that Lyly sings the praises of wine instead of ale shows the literary rather than realistic source of his inspiration. Under the Tudors ale became the favorite drink of the people. The importation of wines from France and from Spain was interrupted and curtailed by the wars with those countries; and the introduction simultaneously of spices from the Orient, and of improved brewing methods from Flanders, brought ale into sudden and lasting popularity.² But aside from this point of realism, Lyly's song is un-English. He uses the machinery of the Italian drinking-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

² *Society in the Elizabethan Age*, Hubert Hall, London, 1886, p. 76.

song, in which Bacchus and his followers are prominent images of the poet's moods. Instead of representing an English scene of conviviality in any real form, he simply restates the mythical point of view:—

“Io, Bacchus! To thy table
 Thou callest every drunken rabble;
 We already are stiff drinkers,
 Then seal us for thy jolly skinkers.
 Wine, O wine,
 O juice devine,
 How dost thou the nowle refine!” etc.¹

This play contains also one of Lyly's best known songs, “O Cupid! monarch over kings!”² It differs from the other examples of his ornate lyrics in the satiric hit at women which concludes it. The song is one of the occasional revolts against the strictly chivalric mood, which continue though faintly the tradition of the Middle English satiric song.

The songs in George Peele's dramas resemble the lyrics in the romances. They incline toward

¹ Cf. the chorus from Poliziano's *Orfeo*, 1471:—

“Ciascun sequa, O Bacco, te;
 Bacco, Bacco, oé, oé!
 Di corimbi e di verd' edere
 Cinto il capo abbiám così,
 per servirti a tuo richiedere
 festeggiando notte e dí.
 Ogna beva; Bacco è qui;
 e lasciate beve a me;
 Ciascun sequa, O Bacco, te,” etc.

² Bullen, *Lyrics from the Dramatists of the Elizabethan Age*, p. 16.

ambitious structure, yet they have always a certain lightness of tone. Most of them lack lyric form. A good example of their complicated structure is the duet between Paris and C  none in the *Arraignement of Paris*, 1584. C  none sings one stanza, then Paris sings one, then both together; this order is repeated for the second part of the song. The opening stanzas give a good idea of the lyrical quality of the whole: —

Oenone. “Fair and fair, and twice so fair;
As fair as any maybe;
The fairest shepherd on our green,
A love for any lady.

Paris. Fair and fair, and twice so fair,
As fair as any maybe;
Thy love is fair for thee alone,
And for no other lady!”¹

Peele’s name in lyric poetry always suggests the song from *Polyhymnia*, 1590, “His golden locks time hath to silver turned.”² This lyric owes something of its present popularity to Thackeray’s quotation of it in the *Newcomes*, but it is good enough to stand on its own merits. It is one of Peele’s few songs that have lyric unity. The motive of time’s changes introduced in the first line is continued throughout; it is illustrated by the change in the warrior’s appearance, from the beauty of youth to the decay of age; then it is imaged in the warrior’s change of occupation, from

¹ *Works of George Peele*, A. H. Bullen, 1888, i. p. 20.

² *Ibid.*, ii. p. 302.

war to peace, from love-songs to prayers; then finally, in contrast, the devotion to his sovereign remains unchangeable:—

“ Though from court to cottage he depart,
His saint is sure of his unspotted heart.”

The *Old Wives' Tale*, 1595, contains a harvest-song, one of the first examples of what seems a favorite type with the dramatists. Usually it is taken almost directly from life; by the rudeness of phrases and the simplicity of ideas the poet attempts realism. Here, however, Peele carries over the images into another sphere:—

“ Lo, here we come a-sowing, a-sowing,
And sow sweet fruits of love.”¹

Thomas Nashe's *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, 1600, has a number of fine songs. The tradition of the English spring-song, which we have seen represented in Lyly, is here carried on by “Spring, the sweet spring, is the year's pleasant king.”² The singing of the birds is made more than usually important by the imitation of them in the refrain. Several phrases, as well as the general spirit of this lyric, suggest Shakspere's “It was a lover and his lass.” The date of *As You Like It* is probably 1599,³ almost the same year as Nashe's drama; it is impossible to tell which poet imitated the other.

¹ *Works*, i. p. 314. ² Dodsley, *Old Plays*, Hazlitt, viii. p. 23.

³ For convenience, the dates given for Shakspere's plays follow Sidney Lee's *Life of Shakspere*, and the disputed authorship of some songs is not discussed.

There is a harvest-song of the type referred to in the preceding paragraphs. It seems to be more or less a transcription from some rude rimes of the country folk :—

“ Hooky, hooky, we have shorn,
And we have bound,
And we have brought Harvest
Home to town.”¹

There is, of course, no opportunity in a stanza of this length for lyric development. Throughout the Elizabethan drama occur examples of this kind of undeveloped lyric atom—usually in quotations from popular ballads or from folk-songs.

The most remarkable lyrics in this play are those which, while mourning departed summer and approaching winter, voice a curious note of pessimism, even of despair. The best example is the lyric, “Adieu; farewell earth’s bliss,”² with its curious refrain taken from the Litany. In theme this is but a statement of the miscellany motive, that life is uncertain; but Nashe, by the poignancy of the grief expressed, raises his poem far above miscellany standards. The central motive is stated in the first lines :—

“ Adieu ; farewell earth’s bliss,
This life uncertain is.”

This truth is illustrated in the second stanza by the image of the rich man unable to buy health ; in the third stanza by the image of beauty worn down

¹ Dodsley, *Old Plays*, Hazlitt, viii. p. 49.

² *Ibid.*, p. 78.

with wrinkles; in the fourth stanza by the image of Hector's strength become helpless food for worms; and in the fifth stanza by the image of wit silenced by death. The lyric is full of the horror of pestilence; probably it, as well as its companion songs, "Autumn hath all the summer's fruitful treasure,"¹ and "Fair summer droops, droop men and beasts therefore,"² was inspired by the plague of 1592.

Thomas Kyd's *Cornelia*, translated from the French poet Garnier, contains several choruses of the classic kind already noticed. Kyd's examples are almost the best that we have met, but it is fairly certain that his drama was never acted. The chorus on fortune, a true miscellany subject, has considerable dignity:—

" Fortune in power imperious
Used o'er the world and worldlings thus
To tyrannize;
When she hath heapt her gifts on us
Away she flies," etc.³

Kyd is certainly not a song-writer, in the sense that Campion or Nashe is, but his perfectly adequate literary art makes his commonplace themes often very effective. As the tone he adopts is, from the nature of his subjects, dogmatic or gnomic, he has little opportunity for lyric form; he teaches his lesson, whether of fortune or of human frailty,

¹ *Old Plays*, p. 89.

² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³ *Works of Thomas Kyd*, F. S. Boas, Oxford, 1901, p. 132.

without any emotion at all, except what may be excited in his readers by the pleasure of his rather good verses.

Thomas Dekker, like Kyd, has something of the old gnomie subject-matter, but he is a truer singer. Two songs of his, from *Patient Grissell*, 1599, are especially beautiful, and show that if he lacked the harmonious strength of the great lyrists, he was at least master of melody. The first of these songs, "Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?" is an ornate praise of the simple life. It is full of musical cadences, got from the repetition of phrases:—

"Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?

O sweet content!

Art thou rich, yet is thy mind perplexèd?

O punishment!

Dost thou laugh to see how fools are vexèd

To add to golden numbers, golden numbers?

O sweet content! O sweet O sweet content!" etc.¹

The same qualities, on a smaller scale, appear in the second song, a lullaby, "Golden slumbers kiss your eyes."²

In Shakspeare's songs we have the highest development of the lyric in the drama. As the plays became less narrative and more dramatic, there was less and less room for long lyrics. In Shakspeare the songs are quite short, yet they are well developed and have perfect lyric form. "Who is

¹ *Prose Works*, A. B. Grosart, 1886, v. p. 121.

² *Ibid.*, v. p. 193.

Silvia," in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, 1591, is one of the best. In external structure it follows the song in *Astrophel and Stella* : —

" Who is it that this dark night
Underneath my window plaineth ? " ¹

The first two lines of each stanza ask a question, which is answered in the last three. This antiphonal effect is heightened by the alternate use of iambic and trochaic lines. In the first stanza Silvia is found to have beauty of soul, of body, and of mind — " Holy, fair, and wise is she." ² In the second stanza she is praised for her courtesy of manner and for her willingness to love. In the last stanza the poet sums up her praises in a cadence which is rarely found in any other singer. His songs all end with a fall of emotion and of verbal melody which has the effect of absolute finality.

Love's Labour's Lost, 1591, is full of fine songs. There is an example of the French *romance*, such as we found in Breton's contribution to the song-books.³ Shakspeare varies the theme slightly; instead of overhearing two lovers in dispute, he finds Love enamored of a blossom : —

" On a day — alack the day ! —
Love, whose month is ever May,
Spied a blossom, passing fair,
Playing in the wanton air," etc.⁴

¹ Arber's *English Garner*, i. p. 578.

² Bullen, *Songs from the Dramatists of the Elizabethan Age*, p. 31.

³ See above, chap. vii. p. 241.

⁴ Bullen, *Songs from the Dramatists of the Elizabethan Age*, p. 35.

The two songs that conclude the play, on summer and on winter respectively, are realistic pictures of English life, as concrete in their own way as the drinking-song, "Back and sides go bare." The spring-song makes traditional employment of birds and flowers in its images; the cuckoo is taken as the typical bird of the season. The winter-song is more interesting for its idyllic pictures, but otherwise it closely parallels the preceding lyric. The owl's screech takes the place of the song-birds, and icicles hang where the flowers bloomed. The effect of outdoor cold and fireside comfort is vividly portrayed:—

" When all around the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marian's nose looks red and raw,
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
Then nightly sings the staring owl." ¹

To mention all of Shakspeare's songs would be impossible here. It will be sufficient to note their general character. They divide themselves into two types—regular stanza-forms with strong popular rhythms, and irregular cadences, in which the great poet achieves his most individual effects. Of the first class a good illustration is from *Much Ado*, 1599. Both stanzas, with the refrain, correspond exactly to each other; it will be necessary to quote but one. The tendency toward a strongly marked

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

cesura, or even toward an internal rime, characterizes all popular stage-songs, from *Gammer Gurton's Needle* to *Hamlet* : —

“Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more ;
Men were deceivers ever ;
One foot in sea and one on shore,
To one thing constant never ;
Then sigh not so, but let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny,
Converting all your songs of woe
Into Hey nonny, nonny.”¹

The well-known songs from *Twelfth Night*, of the same year, “O mistress mine, where are you roaming,”² and “Come away, come away, death,”³ are restatements of old miscellany themes, but the poet's genius makes them seem quite new. The first, divested of its melody and images, is simply the “carpe diem” motive; the second is the threat of the rejected lover to court untimely death. The song from *As You Like It*, 1599, “It was a lover and his lass”⁴ is more obviously in line with the Romance *pastourelle*; the lovers meet in the fields; their wooing is described, together with the song which they sing. The poet concludes with a restatement of the Renaissance motive that life is but a flower, whose springtime should be enjoyed ere it passes.

The most remarkable of Shakspeare's regular lyrics is also the shortest. It is the song, “Take, O

¹ *Songs from the Dramatists of the Elizabethan Age*, p. 43.

² *Ibid.*, p. 45.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

take, those lips away," from *Measure for Measure*, 1604. It is really too short to portray a developed emotion, but it succeeds admirably in expressing a mood. Its chief value, however, is its wonderful sweetness. No song in the Elizabethan period has more of the emotional quality of music. The sadness, which characterizes it, is got as much from the sound of the words as from their meaning. How unique the song is may well be seen by comparing the stanza added by Fletcher in the *Bloody Brother*, 1639.

Of the irregular songs, the first example is in the *Merchant of Venice*, 1594, "Tell me where is fancy bred." It is divided in subject between a question and its answer; in external form this division is represented by two stanzas of four and of six lines. Properly the first division introduces the motive, and the second develops it. The cadence noticed as characteristic of Shakspeare's songs is here well illustrated:—

"Tell me where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart or in the head?
How begot, how nourished?
Reply, reply.

It is engendered in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies;
Let us all sing fancy's knell:
I'll begin it—Ding, dong, bell.
Ding, dong, bell."¹

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

"Hark! hark! the lark," from *Cymbeline*, 1610, is probably the best known of all Shakspeare's songs. The image which forms its chief charm is the very keynote of Shakspeare's lyric mood. It should be noticed that this is a perfect example of the *aubade*, or morning-song of a lover to his lady. The conditions under which Cloten has it sung in the play agree entirely with its traditional setting. In lyric form the song is very quickly developed. The stimulus of the dawn is pictured in the first lines; the awakening of the world is imaged in the sun-touched flowers; then the lover's emotion resolves into a cry to his lady to awake. The song comes to its logical end in the word, "Arise!" repeated twice.

Of Shakspeare's numerous witch-songs the best is the famous trio of the witches in *Macbeth*, 1606.¹ It has the short lines and the almost doggerel movement of the supernatural songs in the mysteries. It is interesting to notice that the method employed for effecting emotions of horror—a simple enumeration of fearful images—is somewhat cognate to the way in which, on the mystery stage, the devils attempt an effect of terror. The methods of all these supernatural scenes, and, consequently, of the lyrics they include, were probably evolved naturally from the folk-lore of the people and from the exigencies of the Elizabethan stage.

From Shakspeare's great contemporary, Ben Jon-

¹ *Songs from the Dramatists of the Elizabethan Age*, p. 54.

son, the lyric received a strictly literary treatment, which marked its decline as a practical song. Jonson's lyrics must be read to be fully appreciated; their melody is not so important as their careful structure. They are generally of a very regular pattern, each stanza answering syllable for syllable with its fellows; Jonson's Greek training would naturally make him disapprove of such irregular forms as Shakspeare employed. One of the most popular songs, which, however, is steeped in classical rather than in English feeling, is the hymn to Diana from *Cynthia's Revels*, 1600:—

“Queen and huntress, chaste and fair,
Now the sun is laid to sleep,
Seated in thy silver chair,
State in wonted manner keep;
Hesperus entreats thy light,
Goddess excellently bright, etc.”¹

The lyric emotion in Jonson never burns very bright; he is an intellectual artist rather than a singer. This quality also takes his lyrics out of the sphere of practical song, and makes them the model of Herrick's most carefully wrought poems. One illustration, indeed, from the *Silent Woman*, 1609, foreshadows Herrick, not only in manner, but in theme:—

“Give me a look, give me a face,
That makes simplicity a grace;
Robes loosely flowing, hair as free:
Such sweet neglect more taketh me
Than all the adulteries of art;
They strike my eyes, but not my heart.”²

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

² *Ibid.*, p. 70.

Beaumont and Fletcher frequently make the same popular appeal as Shakspeare does, but they also show at times the literary tendency of Jonson. The *Maid's Tragedy*, produced about 1611, contains illustrations of both sides of their art. The three bridal songs are classical in feeling and literary structure; the need or the presence of a musical accompaniment is not felt. A stanza from the first is typical:—

“Cynthia, to thy power and thee
We obey.
Joy to this great company!
And no day
Come to steal this night away,
Till the rites of love be ended,
And the lusty bridegroom say,
Welcome light, of all befriended!”¹

On the other hand, Aspasia's song has the un-academic emotional value of many of Shakspeare's lyrics, and its form is simple. It is lyrical not only in the sense of being musical, but also in the modern sense of expressing personality:—

“Lay a garland on my hearse
Of the dismal yew;
Maidens, willow branches bear;
Say, I died true.
My love was false, but I was firm
From my hour of birth.
Upon my buried body lie
Lightly, gentle earth!”²

¹ *Songs from the Dramatists of the Elizabethan Age*, p. 104.

² *Ibid.*, p. 106.

CHAPTER IX
METRICAL FORMS IN THE ELIZABETHAN LYRIC
CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED

To notice all the varieties of stanza or of rhythm in the Elizabethan lyric would be impossible here; it will be enough to mention the most typical and the most unusual forms. In *Tottel's Miscellany* the lack of rhythmic variety is astonishing, only the iambic measures being used; the stanza-forms, however, are numerous. The most important, the sonnet, here enters the literature for the first time, and even within the scope of Tottel's book we can see how quickly it settled into its accepted Elizabethan form. Wyatt, the first sonneteer, follows the Petrarchan models closely. The octave of his sonnets seldom varies from the scheme *abba, abba*. Perhaps because of his epigrammatic genius, he shows a fondness for a final couplet in the sextet. To achieve this effect he employs several rime-schemes, *cdcdce*,¹ *cdccdd*,² or *cddcee*.³ This last construction is fairly typical, and deserves an illustration:—

¹ Arber Reprint, p. 36.

² *Ibid.*, p. 33.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

"Farewell, Love, and all thy lawes for ever.
 Thy bayted hokes shall tangle me no more.
 Senec and Plato call me from thy lore ;
 To parfit wealth my wit for to endever.
 In blinde errorr when I dyd parsever ;
 Thy sharp repulse, that pricketh aye so sore ;
 Taught me in trifles that I set no store ;
 But scape forth thence ; since libertie is lever,

Therefore, farewell ; go trouble yonger hartes ;
 And in me claime no more auctoritie ;
 With ydle youth go use thy propartie ;
 And thereon spend thy many brittle dartes.
 For, hytherto though I have lost my tyme ;
 Me lyst no lenger rotten bowes to clime."

Wyatt shows a disposition to reduce the number of rimes ; in one sonnet he allows himself but three,¹ and in a fourteen-line combination, not properly a sonnet, he uses but two.²

Surrey departs at once from Wyatt's strict models. His favorite form is the English sonnet of three quatrains and a couplet. He, too, prefers a small number of rimes, and makes two sonnets on three rimes,³ and one on two.⁴ Grimald uses Surrey's form, but with seven rimes, and as this is the form afterward practised by Shakspeare, it is selected for illustration, instead of Surrey's:—

"By heavens hye gift, incase revived were
 Lysip, Apelles, and Homer the great ;
 The most renownd and ech of them sance pere,
 In graving, paintyng, and the Poets feat ;

¹ Arber Reprint, p. 62.

² *Ibid.*, p. 53.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 22.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Yet could they not, for all their vein divine,
 In marble, table, paper more, or lesse,
 With cheezil, pencil, or with poyntel fyne,
 So grave, so paynt, or so by style expresse
 (Though they beheld of every age and land
 The fayrest books, in every tounge contrived,
 To fraym a fourm, and to direct their hand)
 Of noble prince the lively shape described :
 As, in the famous woork, that Eneids hight,
 The naamkouth Virgil hath set forth in sight.”¹

Among the longer verse-forms, the “poulter’s measure” — alternate alexandrines and septenaries — is most frequently used. This favorite meter of the early Elizabethans needs a line or two of quotation for future identification : —

“When sommer toke in hand the winter to assail,
 With force of might, and vertue gret, his stormy blasts to
 quail,
 And when he clothed faire the earth about with grene,
 And every tree new garmented, that pleasure was to
 sene,” etc.²

In this miscellany the heroic couplet is used,³ as well as rimed septenaries,⁴ and there are several examples of pentapody quatrains — the later elegiac measure.⁵

In several of his epigrams Wyatt uses the rime-scheme of the Italian *rispetto*, *abababcc*. This form, destined to become famous in narrative poetry as the *ottava rima*, is especially interesting here because of its reappearance along with the madrigal in the song-books : —

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

² *Ibid.*, p. 98.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

"Syghes are my foode ; my drink are my teares.
 Clinkyng of fetrers would such Musick crave,
 Stink and close ayer away my life it weares.
 Pore innocence is all the hope I have.
 Rayn, winde, or wether judge I by mine eares.
 Malice assaults, that righteousnesse should have.
 Sure am I, Bryan, this wound shall heale again ;
 But yet alas, the skarre shall still remayn." ¹

The Italian *terza rima*, riming *aba, bcb, cdc*, etc., with a final quatrain, *xyxy*, is used by both Wyatt and Surrey. Surrey uses it in his *Description of the restless state of a lover*:—

"The sonne hath twice brought furth his tender grene,
 And clad the earth in lively lustinesse ;
 Ones have the windes the trees despoiled clene,
 And new again begins their cruelnesse,
 Since I have hid under my brest the harm
 That never shall recover healthfulnesse.
 The winter's hurt recovers with the warm," etc. ²

In one lyric Wyatt uses the rime-royal, Chaucer's great stanza. The rime-scheme of this form is *ababbcc*:—

"They flee from me, that sometime did me seke
 With naked fote stalkyng within my chamber,
 Once have I seen them gentle, tame and meke,
 That now are wild and do not once remember
 That sometyme they have put themselves in danger,
 To take bread at my hands, and now they range,
 Busily sekyng in continual change." ³

Throughout *Tottel's Miscellany* short lines are used in various familiar combinations. Wyatt excels in grouping such lines into stanzas of lyric

¹ Arber Reprint, p. 82.

² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

grace; his skill in this direction largely explains his marked song-quality. The illustration is quoted from one of his best known songs:—

“ My lute awake performe the last
Labour that thou and I shall waste ;
And end that I have now begonne ;
And when this song is song and past,
My lute be still, for I have done.”¹

The poetic Renaissance, illustrated by all these lyrics, worked a great reform in the substitution of short lines for the old septenaries and alexandrines. In the anonymous lyrics of this first miscellany, the new and the old styles of verse appear frequently in the same stanza. One example has an unusual combination of alexandrines and tetrapodies:—

“ The wisest way, thy bote, in wave or winde to guie,
Is neither still the trade of middle streame to trie ;
Ne (warely shunning wrecke by wether) aye to nie,
To presse upon the perillous shore.
Both clenely flees he filthe ; ne wonnes a wretched wight,
In carlish coate ; and carefull court aie thrall to spite,
With port of proud astate he leves ; who doth delight,
Of golden meane to hold the lore.”²

The second miscellany, the *Paradise of Dainty Devices*, contains several elaborate combinations of long and short lines. The *débat*, mentioned before,⁴ is interesting for its anapestic rhythm:—

“ A. Shall I no way win you, to grant my desire ?
B. What woman will grant you, the thing you require,”
etc.³

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

² *Ibid.*, p. 255.

³ Collier's Reprint, p. 106.

⁴ See above, p. 83.

A good example of elaborate stanza is found in a love-plaint. Of the twelve lines, the first four are alexandrines, the second four are alternate alexandrines and septenaries, the third four are tetrapodies, and the whole stanza is followed by a refrain:—

“Each thing I plainly see whose vertues may availe,
To ease the pinching paine, which gripes the growing wight;
By Phisicks sacred skill, whose rule doth seldom fayle,
Through labours long inspect, is plainly brought to light.
I know, there is no fruite, no leafe, no roote, no rind,
No herbe, no plant, no juyce, no gumme, no metal deeply
mined;
No Pearle, no precious stone, no Jeme of rare effect,
Whose vertues, learned Gallens bookes at large do not
detect.
Yet al their force can not appease,
The furious fittes of my disease;
Nor any drugs of phisikes art,
Can ease the grieve that gripes my hart.
Oh strange disease.”¹

The third miscellany, the *Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions*, shows an increased freedom of rhythm; several of the lyrics are in anapestic or dactylic lines. In the song “Not light-of-love, lady,” which is written to fit a popular tune, the dactylic lines are evidently necessitated by the music; it is also evident that the original words of this tune must have been in the same rhythm. A number of songs in the book have refrains; one famous anapestic example has a refrain after every line:—

¹ Collier's Reprint, p. 64.

"My love, what mislyking in mee do you finde,
 Sing all of greene willow ;
 That on such a sudden you alter your minde,
 Sing willow, willow, willow ;
 What cause doth compell you so fickle to bee ?
 Willow, willow, willow, willow ;
 In hart which you plighted, most loyall to me,
 Willow, willow, willow, willow." ¹

The *Phoenix Nest* has several examples of trochaic rhythm and of refrains. One lyric by Thomas Lodge is written in trochaic tetrapodies, with feminine rimes and a refrain of two lines : —

"Now I find, thy looks were fained,
 Quickly lost, and quicklie gained ;
 Soft thy skin, like wooll of wethers,
 Hart unstable, light as feathers ;
 Toong untrustie, subtill-sighted ;
 Wanton will with change delighted,
 Sirene pleasant, foe to reason ;
 Cupid plague thee, for this treason!" ²

In one poem an attempt is made at a verse of but one accent, as in this stanza : —

" Her face
 So faire
 First bent
 Mine eye," etc. ³

England's Helicon is very rich in stanzaic effects, most of which are got from variations of simple forms. The number of trochaic verses is large. There is one echo-song, in which the important word, falling at the end of the line, is repeated as an echo : —

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

² *Ibid.*, p. 73.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

“Shall we go dance the hay? the hay?
 Never pipe could better play
 better shepherds Roundelay.
 Shall we go sing the song? the song?” etc.¹

A remarkable example of stanza experiment is the *Shepherd Faustus his Song*. Beginning with a quatrain, it repeats the first four lines in order as refrains, one after each of the four following stanzas.² Of the more usual combinations of lines of various lengths, the following example is typical:—

“Happy shepherds, sit and see,
 With joy,
 The peerless wight;
 For whose sake Pan keeps from ye
 Annoy,
 And gives delight.
 Blessing this pleasant spring,
 Her praises must I sing,
 List you swaines, list to me;
 The while your flocks feeding be.”³

Davidson's *Poetical Rhapsody* contains an interesting technical device in the inverted rime, as used in the *Dialogue Poem of Strephon and Klaius*. The rime-words of each stanza are repeated, in inverted order, in the next:—

“O whither shall I turne mee?
 From thine eies sight,
 Whose sparkling light
 With quenchless flames, present and absent burne mee?
 For I burne whereas I view them,
 And I burne when I eschew them.

¹ Collier's Reprint, p. 222.

² *Ibid.*, p. 107.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

Since I cannot eschew them,
 But that their light
 Is in my sight,
 Both when I view them not and when I view them,
 Ere their flames will cease to burn me,
 From myself myself must turn me." ¹

There are several experiments in the classical hexameter, all as unsuccessful as such experiments usually are. One of the best is an elegy on Sidney:—

"What can I now suspect? or what can I fear any longer?
 Oft did I fear, oft hope, whil'st life in Sidney remained.
 Of nothing can I now despair, for nought can I hope
 for." ²

There are several examples of a meter called in the miscellany "Phaleuciak." Its movement seems to be, what the similarity of name might suggest, an imitation of the *Phalaecean* meter, denoted thus:—

⌒ ⌒ ⌒ ⌒ ⌒ ⌒ ⌒ ⌒ ⌒ ⌒

"Time nor place did I want, what held me tongide?
 What charms, what magical abused altars?
 Wherefore wisht I so oft that houre unhappy," etc. ³

The Italian madrigal is represented by several examples. This form consisted of two triplets, riming usually *abbabb*. A concluding couplet is often added. In a more elaborate form the madrigal may contain three triplets, or two triplets and two couplets. The following illustration is fairly simple, but the lines, according to the English practice, are of unequal lengths:—

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

² *Ibid.*, p. 162.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

"Thine eyes so bright
 Bereft my sight,
 When first I viewed thy face.
 So now my light
 Is turned to night,
 I stray from place to place.
 Then guide me of thy kindnesse,
 So shall I bless my blindness." ¹

Turberville's *Epitaphs, Epigrams, Songs, and Sonnets* contains some interesting stanzas. He uses frequently the form *ababcc*, which became the most popular stanza in Elizabethan poetry.

"Here graved is a good and godly wight,
 That yielded hath her cynders to the soyle,
 Who ran hir race in vertues tylt aright
 And never had at Fortunes hand the foyle ;
 The guide was God whom shee did aye endue,
 And Vertue was the mark whereat she thrue." ²

In Turberville's lyrics all combinations of alexandrines and septenaries — the "poulter's measure" — are printed as quatrains. In one case the broken verses are rimed, so as to give the effect of the "common meter" of hymnology : —

"Your flowers for their hue
 were fresh and fair to see ;
 Yet was your meaning not so true
 as you it thought to bee." ³

One song is written in a most extravagant stanza, which has apparently little connection with traditional literary models, or with practical song : —

¹ Collier's Reprint, p. 114.

² Chalmers's *English Poets*, ii. p. 587.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 603.

“ Of Tantalus plight,
The poets wright,
Complaining
And fayning
In sorrowful sounding songes.
Who feeles (they saye)
For apples gaze
Such payning
Not gayning
The fruite for which hee longes
For when hee thinkes to feede thereon,
The fickle flattering tree is gone ;
And all in vain hee hopes to have
This famine to expell
The flitting fruite that looks so brave
And likes his eie so well ;
And thus his hunger doth increase,
And hee can never find release.”¹

In the second lyric of the eclogue for August in Spenser's *Shepheards Calender*, the sestina is introduced into our literature. Spenser employs a slightly simpler rime-scheme than is usual in this difficult form, but he follows the principle of its structure. The sestina consists of six stanzas of six lines each, followed by an envoy of three lines. The first stanza rimes *abcdef*. In this example each stanza begins on the rime of the preceding verse, and then continues the rime-words in their original order. The second stanza therefore rimes *fabcde*, the third *efabcd*, until the rime-word *a* falls last in the line, *bcdefa*. In the final triplet, Spenser breaks each verse into three

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 590.

and two stresses so as to repeat the rime-words in their original order:—

“Ye wastefull Woodes! beare witnesse of my woe
Wherein my plaints did oftentimes resound;
Ye carelesse byrds are privie to my cryes,
Which in your songs were wont to make a part;
Thou, pleasaunt spring, hast luld me oft asleepe,
Whose streames my tricklinge teares did ofte augment.

Resort of people doth my greefs augment,
The walled townes doe worke my greater woe;
The forest wide is fitter to resound
The hollow Echo of my carefull cryes;
I hate the house, since thence my love did part,
Whose waylefull want debarres myne eyes from sleepe.

Let stremes of tears supply the place of sleepe;
Let all, that sweet is, voyd; and all that may augment
My doole, drawe neare! more meete to wayle my woe
Bene the wild woodes, my sorrowes to resound,
Then bedde or bowre, both which I fill with cryes,
When I them see so waist, and fynd no part

Of pleasure past. Here will I dwell apart
In gastfull grove therefore, till my last sleepe
Doe close mine eyes; so shall I not augment
With sight of such as chaunge my restlesse woe.
Helpe me, ye banefull byrds, whose shrieking sound
Ys signe of dreery death, my deadly cryes

Most ruthfully to tune; And as my cryes
(Which of my woe cannot bewray least part)
You heare all night, when nature craveth sleepe,
Increase, so let your yrksome yells augment.
Thus all the night in plaints, the daye in woe,
I vowed have to wayst, till safe and sound

She home returne, whose voyces silver sound
To cheerefull songs can chaunge my cherelesse cryes.
Hence with the Nightingale will I take part,
That blessed byrd, that spends her time of sleepe
In songs and plaintive pleas, the more t' augment
The memory of hys misdeede that bred her woe.

And you that feeles no woe,
When as the sound
Of these my nightly cryes
Ye heare apart,
Let breake your sounder sleepe,
And pitie augment." ¹

A good example of the less complicated stanzas in the *Shepheards Calender* is in the eclogue for April. The rhythm employed is iambic, but in the shorter verses extra syllables are introduced, so as to give the effect of an anapestic movement. The stanza of nine lines is composed of verses of five, two, and four stresses, in this order:—

"I see Calliope speede her to the place,
Where my Goddesses shines;
And after her the other Muses trace,
With their Violines;
Bene they not Bay braunches which they do beare,
All for Eliza in her hand to weare?
So sweetely they play,
And sing all the way,
That it a heaven is to heare." ²

The lyrics in Greene's earlier romances employ simple stanzas, usually the familiar *ababcc*. But in *Menaphon*, 1589, we have one of the most

¹ *Works*, p. 471.

² *Ibid.*, p. 455.

complicated stanzas of the period. The song, "Some say Love," is written in what is but a variation of an old rime-scheme, but its effect is quite new. If resolved into its essentials, the stanza is composed of two quatrains in tetrapodies, followed by a pentapody couplet. This is the rime-scheme of Sidney's ten-line epigrams. The first, third, fifth, and seventh lines, however, are broken by a syncopated foot at the second accent; *e.g.* :—

"Some say Lóve, foolish Lóve."

These broken lines are then treated as two short staves, and the two quatrains become expanded into twelve lines. The short verses all end in the same word—a trick of style that appears, together with a fondness for few rimes, in many of the highly wrought stanzas of this decade. This analysis of the stanza can best be understood in a quotation :—

"Some say Love,
Foolish Love,
Doth rule and govern all the gods ;
I say Love,
Inconstant Love,
Sets men's senses far at odds.
Some swear Love,
Smooth-faced Love,
Is sweetest sweet that men can have.
I say Love,
Sour Love,
Makes virtue yield as beauty's slave ;

A bitter sweet, a folly worst of all,
That forceth wisdom to be folly's thrall."¹

Greene is fond of separating couplets by single lines of different length. Many of his elaborate stanzas might be resolved into this simple form. The best illustration is from this same romance:—

"Like to Diana in her summer-weed,
Girt with a crimson robe of brightest dye,
Goes fair Samela;
Whiter than be the flocks that straggling feed,
When washed by Arethusa Fount they lie,
Is fair Samela," etc.²

Lodge imitates the stanza of "Some say Love" in Montanus's sonnet in *Rosalind*, 1590. He omits the concluding couplet, and does not end all the broken lines with one word:—

"Phœbe sat,
Sweet she sat,
Sweet sat Phœbe when I saw her,
White her brow,
Coy her eye,
Brow and eye how much you please me!
Words I spent,
Sighs I sent;
Sighs and words can never draw her.
Oh my love,
Thou art lost,
Since no sight could ever ease thee."³

The short lines have a tendency to paraphrase one another, as:—

¹ Bullen, *Lyrics from the Dramatists of the Elizabethan Age*, p. 237. ² *Ibid.*, p. 240. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

"Phœbe sat,
Sweet she sat."

This tendency was parodied in Tarlton's *News out of Purgatory* : —

"Downe I sat,
I sat downe,
Where Flora had bestowed her graces ;
Greene it was,
It was greene,
Far passing other places," etc.¹

Lodge has great skill in managing very simple stanzas. In the tetrapody quatrain, for example, he has all the grace and variety that distinguishes the later Cavalier masters of that slight form : —

"Love guards the roses of thy lips
And flies about them like a bee ;
If I approach he forward skips,
And if I kiss he stingeth me." ²

Sidney's *Arcadia* contains many interesting experiments. In one case the expanded sonnet of the Italians is imitated by duplicating the final rime of each quatrain in the English sonnet form : —

"Phœbus farewell, a sweeter saint I serve,
The high conceits thy heavenly wisdomes breed,
My thoughts forget ; my thoughts which never swerve
From her in whom is sowne their freedoms seed,
And in whose eyes my dainty doome I reede.

Phœbus farewell, a sweeter saint I serve,
Thou art far off, thy kingdome is above ;

¹ *Lyrics from the Dramatists of the Elizabethan Age*, Note, p. 285 ; the parody is quoted in full.

² *Ibid.*, p. 276.

The heav'n on earth with beauties doth preserve.
 Thy beames I like, but her cleare rayes I love;
 Thy force I feare, her force I still doe prove.

Phœbus yeeld up thy title in my minde;
 She doth possesse, thy image is defac't,
 But if thy rage some brave revenge will finde,
 On her, who hath in me thy temple rac't,
 Employ thy might, that she my fires may taste.

And how much more her worth surmounteth thee,
 Make her as much more base by loving me."¹

Sidney is fond of a ten-line form, used not as a stanza, but, like Wyatt's epigrammatic forms, as a complete poem. The usual rime-scheme is *abab cdcd ee*; apparently the poet invented the form by leaving one quatrain out of the English sonnet:—

"Come shepheards weedes, become your masters minde;
 Yeeld outward show, what inward change he tryes;
 Nor be abasht, since such a guest you finde,
 Whose strongest hope in your weak comfort lyes.
 Come shepheards weedes, attend my wofull cryes;
 Disuse yourselves from sweet Menalcas voyce.
 For other be those tunes which sorrow tyes,
 From those cleere notes which freely may rejoyce.
 Then powre out plaint, and in one word say this;
 Helpelesse his plaint, who spoiles himself of blisse."²

The popularity of classical meters is represented in Sidney by several curious experiments. He attempts a Sapphic strophe; if the reader has not the Greek rhythm in mind, he can hardly learn it from such verses as—

¹ *The Countesse of Pembroke's Arcadia*, 1627, p. 349.

² *Ibid.*, p. 64.

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"Ye poets have done well in times long past,
'Tis given in trifling toys of little price ;
The Chaucer of Pembroke's Arcadia, p. 78.
Ibid., p. 221. Ibid., p. 229.

Why should not I presume to faine as fast,
Espying forth a ground of good devise ?

A Sacred Nymph is ground whereon ile write,
The fairest Nymph that ever yet saw light.
And since her song hath fild my eares with joye,
Hir vertues pleased my minde, hir face my eye,
I dare affirme what some will think a toy,
She Phoenix is, though not of Arabie ;

And yet the plumes about hir neck are bright,
And Sol himselfe in her hath chiefe delight.
You that will know why Sol afoordes her love,
Seeke but the cawse why Peakocks draw the place,
When Juno sitts ; why Venus likes the Dove ;
Or why the Owle befits Minervas grace ;
Then yf you grudge, that she to Sol belonge,
Marke but hir face, and heare hir skill in songe.”¹

Numerous attempts were made in this period to adapt alexandrine verses to the sonnet-form. As a rule, they were not successful. The alexandrine breaks too easily into equal parts, and a fixed cesura is fatal to the already limited effects which can be obtained from the sonnet. The most famous example is the opening sonnet of *Astrophel and Stella* :—

“ Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,
That she, dear she ! might take some pleasure of my pain ;
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain :
I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe,
Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertain ;
Oft turning others’ leaves, to see if thence would flow
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sun-burnt brain ;
But words came halting forth, wanting Invention’s stay.
Invention, Nature’s child, fled step-dame Study’s blows ;

¹ Arber’s Reprint, p. 53.

And others' feet still seemed but strangers in my way,
 Thus great with child to speak, and helpless in my throes;
 Biting my trewand pen, beating myself for spite;
 'Fool!' said my Muse to me, 'look in thy heart and write!'"¹

Barnes uses a sonnet of fifteen lines. The octave is regular, but instead of a sextet he substitutes the rime-royal:—

"It chaunced after, that an youthful squier,
 Such as in courting, could the crafty guise,
 Beheld light Laya, shee with fresh desier,
 Hoping th' achievement of some richer prize;
 Drew to the Courtier, who with tender kisse,
 (As are their guileful fashions which dissemble)
 First him saluted, then with forged blisse
 Of doubtlesse hope, sweete wordes by pause did tremble.
 So whiles shee sleightly gloased, with her new pray,
 Mine hartes eye tending his false mistresse traine;
 Unyoak't himselfe, and closely scaped away,
 And to Parthenope did poast amaine
 For liberal pardon, which she did obtaine;
 And judge (Parthenope) for thou canst tell,
 That his escape from Laya, pleased me well." ²

The sonnet-form of Spenser is probably imitated from Clément Marot. Marot has a form similar to the *terza-rima* in being capable of indefinite extension. The rime-scheme is *abab*, *bcbc*, *cdcd*, *dede*, etc. Spenser uses three quatrains thus bound together with a concluding couplet:—

"One day I wrote her name upon the strand;
 But came the waves, and washed it away;
 Agayne, I wrote it with a second hand;
 But came the tyde, and made my paynes his pray.

¹ Arber's *English Garner*, i. p. 503.

² Grosart's *Occasional Issues*, 1875, i. p. 3.

Wayne man, sayd she, that doest in vaine assay
 A mortall thing so to immortalize ;
 For I myselve shall lyke to this decay,
 And eek my name be wyped out lykewize.
 Not so, quod I ; let baser things devise
 To dy in dust, but you shall live by fame ;
 My verse your vertues rare shall eternize,
 And in the hevens write your glorious name.
 Where, whenas death shall all the world subdew,
 Our love shall live, and later life renew.”¹

Barnes introduced the *canzone* into English literature in *Parthenophil and Parthenophe*. The stanza of this form is divided into two parts, the *fronte* and the *sirima*. These may be bound together by one or more free lines, called *concatenazione*. The *fronte* in turn may be divided into two equal parts, called *piede*, and the *sirima* into two equal parts called *volte*. The whole poem is followed by an envoy, called the *commiato*, which in the strict Italian form takes the rime-scheme of the *sirima*.

The stanza of Barnes's first canzon would be denoted, first *piede*, *abbc* ; second *piede*, *baac* ; *concatenazione*, *cd* ; first *volta*, *dee* ; second *volta*, *dff* : —

“ All bewties farre perfections rest in thee,
 And sweetest grace of graces,
 Deckes thy face bove faces ;
 All vertue takes her glorie from thy minde ;
 The muses in thy wittes have their places,
 And in thy thoughts all mercies bee ;
 Thine hart from all hardnesse free ;

¹ *Works*, p. 584.

An holy place in thy thoughts holinesse doth finde ;
In favorable speech kinde ;
A sacred tongue and eloquent ;
Action sweet and excellent ;
Musique itself in joyntes of her fair fingers is ;
She chauntresse of singers is ;
Her plighted faith is firme and permanent.
O now, now, helpe, wilt thou take some compassion ?
She thinks I flatter, writing on this fashion.”¹

The *commiato* is irregular, having a rime-scheme of its own, *abbcc*: —

“Then do no longer despise,
But with kinde pitie relent thee,
Cease to vexe, and torment mee,
If shame's feare move not, which all discovers,
Feare plague of remorseless lovers.”²

¹ Grosart, *Occasional Issues*, i. p. 96.

² *Ibid.*, p. 100.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

WE have found that the Elizabethan lyric, exclusive of the songs in the drama, is divided, by the conditions of its development, into two periods. The first, the pastoral period, extending nearly to the end of the sixteenth century, and exercising influence in the seventeenth, includes the body of lyrics which incline to be pastoral in subject and idyllic in method. The second, the period best illustrated by the song-books, contains the mass of Elizabethan short songs, not generally pastoral in subject, and epigrammatic, rather than idyllic, in manner.

The first is the true Elizabethan period. Covering the largest part of Elizabeth's reign, it included not only the work of that group of poets who made illustrious her court, but the work of the university wits also, and of all those who, through any channel of culture, were earliest touched by foreign ideals of romance and chivalry. It was the time of expansion for the lyrical as well as for the national genius of England, and the Continent paid

tribute to both. The last surge of the Renaissance brought into English literature the method of the idyl, and the mood of the pastoral—the former a consequence of the Renaissance thirst for beauty, satisfied more fully in other lands by the arts of color and line, but in England only by word-painting; the latter implicit in the romancing spirit of the age, which at almost the same moment had recovered the broad horizons of the older literatures, and discovered the new Hesperides overseas.

This pastoral period might find its typical poet either in Sidney or in Greene or in Lodge, or, above all, in Spenser. His serious and lofty spirit represents the age with most dignity, and his genius was perfectly fitted to its moods and methods. His lyrics, typical in this respect of the whole period, are long, and tend to break into fragments. It is only within the limits of each fragment that Spenser achieves lyric unity, and the lyric unit is frequently indistinguishable from the single picture of a highly wrought idyl. In his lyrics as well as in his epic, Spenser, more than any other Elizabethan, is the poet of those who admire in poetry the methods of painting.

Perhaps as a result of such methods, Spenser's lyrics are all art-lyrics; they need no musical accompaniment, and suggest none. In this connection it is instructive to reflect how swiftly,—almost within the period of this study,—the arts

of music and poetry become dissociated in the lyric. In the manuscript collections of Henry VIII's time, the words and music of the practical song supply no more than their share of the total effect, and the words are immelodious. With Wyatt and Surrey, in spite of their nearness to English practical song, the lyric becomes frankly literary, and takes to itself the verbal quality of music. A parallel is found in their master, Petrarch, who, though close to the practical song of Northern Italy and Provence, exercised his genius only in the literary lyric. In Spenser, a final stage of the development is reached; in his lyrics there is not even, as in Wyatt and Petrarch, the memory nor the suggestion of an original accompaniment of music.

This first Elizabethan period is marked by a sombre mood. The best known of its lyrics, such as are made familiar by the anthologies, give indeed a different impression; but if the production of the period be taken as a whole, the themes are found to be no less serious than those of the Middle English lyric. Themes like the fickleness of fortune, the vanity of human ambition, the blessedness of a quiet life, as clearly expressed in the miscellanies as in the *Mirror for Magistrates*, had no doubt a more than conventional meaning after the meteoric rise and fall of great men under Henry, Mary, and Elizabeth. These serious motives lose their force with time; to us they seem less real

than the slighter themes of courtly love, which survive to give us, perhaps a mistaken impression of the total lyric activity of the period.

At the other end of the Elizabethan age, in direct contrast to the pastoral lyric, the practical song is revived in the song-books. Though the shortest and least characteristic period, it is to general readers the best known, Campion's songs rather than Spenser's or Sidney's being usually taken as the type of Elizabethan lyric. Just as the pastoral lyric made its appeal through word-painting, so these later songs make their appeal through word-music; and this quality has led to the serious misapprehension that here the musical accompaniment makes itself felt. No historian of literature who had seen or heard the music in question, could credit it with such influence. The madrigals and the airs did indeed influence the form of the lyric, since they determined its length; but music at this time had not yet acquired those qualities which it is supposed to have conferred upon poetry.

The contents of the song-books, though practical songs, should be distinguished in one respect from the contents of the first manuscript miscellanies. If we subtract the number of poems by Dyer, Greville, and others, which were adapted to the uses of the madrigal writers, and then subtract the translations and adaptations from Italian poetry, there remains but a modest proportion of these songs which were originally written for music. Most of

them were written simply as poetry, intended to appeal through that art alone. Campion, indeed, was both musician and poet, but he follows the traditions of poetry far more closely than those of music. He writes with Sidney and Spenser for his predecessors, and inherits their music in his verse.

The theory that music and poetry separate where poetry becomes musical, is illustrated by the fate of the manuscript collections of Henry VIII, and of the song-books. Until a few years ago, they were equally accessible. In the former, the words and the music were necessary to each other, so that when the music went out of fashion, the words were forgotten. In the latter also, the music became obsolete, but the words, complete in their own art, survive as poetry.

The form of these songs is significant for two reasons. In the first place, its comparative shortness was conducive to lyric unity — a formal success quite impossible to the idyllic lyrists. Campion's songs have the single stimulus, development, and cadence, of what we have called ideal lyric form. In the second place, the tradition of these short, single flights is taken up by Herrick, and through his use becomes for English literature in our generation the most accredited model of the literary song. It is perhaps in vague imitation of Herrick that there has grown up a type of pseudo-Elizabethan lyric, light in subject, dainty and musical in manner, and sentimental in mood. The makers of such

verses, of whom Mr. Austin Dobson is at times an example, are frequently called by the thoughtless reviewer, "stray Elizabethans."

Between these two periods, dominated by the idyllic art-song, and by the song-books, sonnet-writing should be considered as a transition. Considered as series, there is little difference between the early sequences and the idyllic lyric. We found the *Amoretti*, for example, to resemble in structure the *Epithalamium*—the sonnet serving as the lyric unit in the one case, the stanza in the other. But when the sonnet was written as a single poem, it became the predecessor of the short lyric forms of the song-books. This change of character, from sonnets as a sequence to sonnets as a collection, is traceable in the sonnet period itself, from 1590 to 1600. The first sequences, like *Astrophel and Stella*, have a definite narrative organism. In *Parthenophil and Parthenophe*, however, the structure is loose. Its sonnets are not organically related; though grouped under one general subject, they are in nature occasional. This method of sonnet-collecting branches out toward the end of the period into other forms of lyric; in the art-lyric the best example is *Astræa*, and in the song-books, the *Triumphs of Oriana*.

Parallel with this more or less literary development of the Elizabethan lyric, though not affected by it, is the song in the drama. This, for obvious reasons, is always a practical song, and always

English in sentiment and in manner. The only "literary" affectation in the species was the academic chorus after the classic model, which never took hold of the Elizabethan stage.

The exigencies of stage presentation demanded that the drama-songs be short. On the whole, they are shorter than any other lyrics except the epigrammatic madrigals; but however short, they are never epigrammatic. They give the impression rather of spontaneous, incomplete snatches of song, breaking through the restraint of the drama, and silenced again by the impatient action. The music to which these lyrics were sung, was equally swift and simple. There was no time for elaborate madrigal music, even if the audience could have appreciated it.

So much for an outline of the forms in which the most charming "lyric cry" of our race was uttered. But the secret of the charm, more highly prized to-day than ever before, has not yet fallen into the hands of criticism. May it still remain a delightful mystery!



APPENDIX

A CHRONOLOGY OF THE ELIZABETHAN LYRIC

Most of these dates follow those given in the modern editions in which the entries are accessible. The editions will be found in the Bibliography. Where there is a unique copy, not accessible to the author, or where no copy is known, the *Dictionary of National Biography* is followed.

With the exception of several song-books, and two or three other entries, these publications may all be consulted in reliable editions or reprints.

- 1557. *Tottel's Miscellany.*
- 1560. *Gorboduc.*
- 1563. Googe, Barnaby. *Eglogs, Epytaphes and Sonettes.*
- 1566. Gascoigne, George. *The Supposes.*
Gammer Gurton's Needle.
- 1567. Gascoigne, George. *Jocasta.*
Howell, Thomas. *Newe Sonets and Pretie Pamphlets.*
- 1568. Howell, Thomas. *Arbor of Amitie.*
- 1570. Turberville, George. *Epitaphs, Epigrams, Songs and Sonets.*
- 1572. Gascoigne, George. *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowers.*
- 1575. Churchyard, Thomas. *Chips.*
Gascoigne, George. *Posies.*
- 1576. *Paradise of Dainty Devices.*
- 1577. Breton, Nicholas. *Flourish upon Fancie.*
- 1578. *Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions.*
Whetstone, George. *Promos and Cassandra.*
- 1579. Spenser, Edmund. *The Shepheards Calender.*
- 1580. Gifford, Humphrey. *A Posie of Gilloflowers.*
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1

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The alphabetical order is determined by the author's name, where that is known; otherwise by the title.

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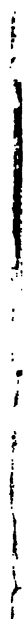
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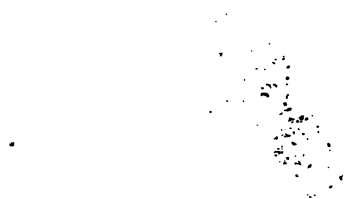
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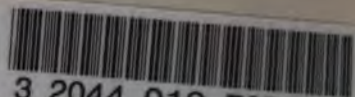
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